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ABSTRACT

The planned Experimental Schools (ES) project changed drastically before it was implemented in Willcox, Arizona, a diverse, multicultural community open to new ideas and outside innovations. As planned by a core of interested principals, teachers, and staff, with help from federal personnel, the project originally called for changes (in curriculum; staff training and utilization; use of time and facilities; administration, organization, and governance; community-schools partnership) and local evaluation. A changing relationship with Washington, significant personnel changes, community dissatisfaction, and confusion as to who "owned" the project transformed the plan into something far different. The implemented ES project consisted of isolated projects in early childhood education, bilingual education, media use, reading, counseling and guidance, and community schools. The positive and exciting planning year was followed by numerous faculty and administrative resignations. The first year of implementation was largely dependent on the personality of the new superintendent, who also resigned at the end of that year, due to increasing disagreement between Washington and Willcox. During the next three years, the increasingly limited project remained a mystery to most teachers, whose interest went to other projects. When the project was terminated a year early, neither the schools nor the community were suprised. (SB)

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From Rural School Project to Rural School Problem: Willcox, Arizona

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Allan F. Burns

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FROM RURAL SCHOOL PROJECT TO RURAL SCHOOL PROBLEM: WILLCOX, ARIZONA

Allan F. Burns

May 1979

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PREFACE

This volume is the result of three years of fieldwork and a year of writing and further analysis about the Willcox, Arizona public schools. The Willcox public schools received a federal grant and later a contract through the National Institute of Education to attempt the implementation of planned change in the content of education, in the organization of its schools, and in the relation of the schools to the community. All names of individuals used in this study have been changed to protect the trust that people in the community put in the study. I have decided that the name of the community should remain in the volume, however, because residents took pride in the fact that the town and surrounding area were the subject of an ethnographic study. In addition, use of the proper name of the community also serves as a reminder that this volume is an account of how people in a specific small town have faced some real problems in the second half of the twentieth century.

This study was one of fifteen major studies carried out by Abt Associates Inc. under contract with the National Institute of Education to document and evaluate ten rural Experimental Schools projects in the United States. These Experimental Schools projects were supported by the Institute in an attempt to improve the quality of education in small

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communities through federal aid. Although I was the only field investigator living in Willcox, the documentation and evaluation effort by Abt Associates Inc. included sociological studies of school organization, pupil changes, and community structure. Each of the other nine rural school districts or local school associations was also studied by a field researcher living in the community. This research effort, which included many different disciplinary, theoretical, and methodological approaches, was an exciting and intellectually stimulating context for carrying out an anthropological case study. Documentation, evaluation, or applied studies of the social impact of planned behavior can benefit from the multidisciplinary approach of this research.

Acknowledgments

My wife, children, and I found Willcox to be a very good place to live. In this report I have not been able to describe all of the vitality, the friendship, or the excitement that residents of the town have created for themselves and for visitors like ourselves. The high desert region of Willcox attracts people of action and of vision. This volume is written as a gesture of appreciation for those people who gave us a share in their lives in Willcox.

Julie, my wife, and our children, Jessica and Christopher, made the research and writing of this volume possible as well as interesting. The National Institute of Education provided the funds to support the research as well as giving me the opportunity for many interesting discussions and friendships with employees of the Institute. Most notably, I am pleased to have made the acquaintance of David Mack who was the federal project officer for Willcox during the last three years of the project. David

showed through personal example that a sense of humor and a commitment to personal and professional goals are important items in the tool kit of anybody interested in studying American education. The Institute's support also made it possible for me to work with Abt Associates, an excellent employer for an anthropologist interested in studying educational change. Bob Herriott was a splendid project director and senior scholar on the project. His interest and support of my explorations into school ethnography and contract research formed the solid base from which I was able to do the daily tasks of research. Mike Kane was likewise a friend, confidant, and helpful administrator in the Cambridge offices of Abt Associates. The social scientists in the Cambridge offices of the company had to put up with irate school district personnel, angry Institute administrators, and ten skeptical field researchers. Mike Kane is to be congratulated for the sensitivity with which he balanced these often opposing groups. Other scholars and employees of Abt Associates such as Steve Fitzsimmons, Sheila Rosenblum, Andrea Kovacs, Don Muse, and Wendy Abt were also important colleagues in this research. I am also thankful for the useful comments of Michael Trend and the very helpful editorial suggestions and corrections of Mary Schumacher and Peter Desmond. The other fieldworkers on the project, Bill Donnelly, Charlie Stannard, Tony Clinton, Tom Wacaster, Carol and Mike Colfer, Don Messerschmidt, Steve Langdon, Bill Firestone, and Larry Hennigh, as well as their families, provided us with many lively hours of conversation, reflection, and ideas.

Homer Barnett, Howard Becker, Terence Hays, Solon Kimball, and Harry Wolcott provided many insightful comments on various drafts of this study. Helpful criticism was also provided by Rosalie and Murray Wax and

by Robert King who reviewed earlier versions of this manuscript on behalf of the National Institute of Education. Many of the ideas that have become the mainstays of the following chapters were derived from the comments of these scholars.

It is not possible to list all of the people in Willcox who made our stay there, and this study, an enjoyable experience. Our good friends the Sobers, the Seerys, the Coders, the Hansens, the Jacobs, the Nelsons, and especially the Gonzaleses, are deserving of our heartfelt thanks for the good times, support, and help they gave us in Willcox.

Gainesville, Florida
November 1978

Allan F. Burns

INTRODUCTION

In 1972 the superintendent of schools in Willcox, Arizona was told that his school district was one of ten rural districts that would be receiving supplementary funds from the Experimental Schools program in Washington, D.C. For the next five years the Willcox school system designed and implemented what came to be known as "comprehensive changes" in curriculum, staffing, organization, and community relations while the National Institute of Education underwrote this experiment in educational change by supplying close to one million dollars. Such an outlay of capital was quite impressive to local residents: it amounted to almost 15 percent of the school district's budget during each year of the project. In January of 1977 a different superintendent notified the Institute that Willcox did not want to continue with the experiment. The "Rural Schools project" (or "RSP"), as it had become known in Willcox,[1] was terminated one year earlier than had been planned. This case study examines the community and school contexts of the Rural Schools project; it is based on intensive field research carried out in Willcox between 1973 and 1976.

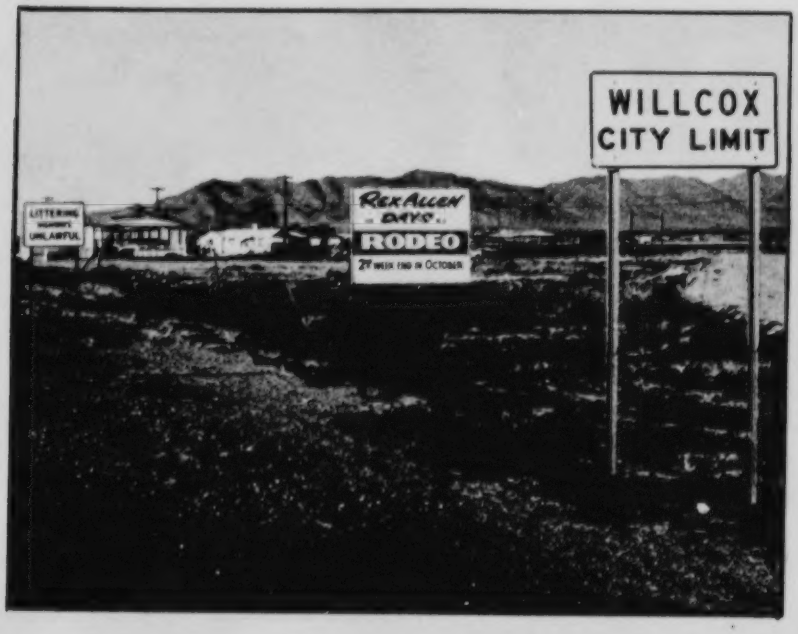
This study examines public policy in education within a small town context. The Experimental Schools program that supported innovations in Willcox as well as in other rural and urban school districts for over five years was conceived as a rational and innovative way to bring federal assistance to local education agencies, and in this way serve to develop local communities. Although the Experimental Schools program was not undertaken on as grand a financial scale as federally sponsored reading programs (Title I, and subsequent "title" programs), it did represent a significant commitment of more than twenty million dollars for rural school and community change. The Experimental Schools program was not designed to be compensatory, but rather was a kind of "general treatment" for bringing about change in schools and communities. The program sought to help local communities pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in their schools and then design ways to develop the strengths and do away with the weaknesses. Although the local project was "experimental" in name only, it illustrates an approach of ameliorative social policy that D.T. Campbell (1975) sees as a common characteristic of the United States as an "experimenting society."

The Experimental Schools program as it was carried out in the small Arizona community of Willcox provides an excellent case study of federal intervention programs in education and local responses to that intervention. A view of this one program can underscore issues that arise in other federal-local policy areas. This study describes the development of several different kinds of relationships between the local community and a federal agency. In this regard, the case of Willcox indicates how dyadic relationships in policy settings can change from friendly to formal, from balanced to imbalanced. The process of planning for change is examined in this study to show how different participants

in the process imbue a planning document with different special meanings. Although a planning document is meant to be rational and well thought-out, the words in such a document take their meanings and connotations from the long hours and personal interests of participants. Once a second group of people begin to implement changes based on an already existing planning document, careful attention must be paid to the words and format of the document, lest the new group fail to grasp the intent and feeling that went into each word. Project "ownership", or the right to claim personal involvement with policy and responsibility for its existence, is also a critical feature of planned change and its implementation. Ownership is especially important in cases such as this in which personnel turnover becomes the norm rather than an exception.

The lesson of this case of five-year involvement between a federal agency and a local community is that small towns can be far from passive recipients of federal program directives. The community of Willcox, with its diverse cultural blend of Mexican Americans, Mexicans, descendants of Anglo settlers, and newcomers from the midwest, took an active role in shaping the structure of federal-local exchanges.

This study focuses on the schools of Willcox, the Experimental Schools project, and the community. These three elements of the study can be seen as three aspects of one social system, a manifestation of the culture of Willcox in the early 1970s. For heuristic purposes each of these three units can be highlighted in order to illustrate different features of the culture of the town. Much of the discussion of the schools in this study concerns their formal and informal social organization. The three schools of the Willcox school district represented a local instance of formal education as it has developed in the U.S. over



Willcox prides itself on being both urban and western.

The annual Rex Allen Days parade brings an estimated 10,000 people to the community of Willcox.

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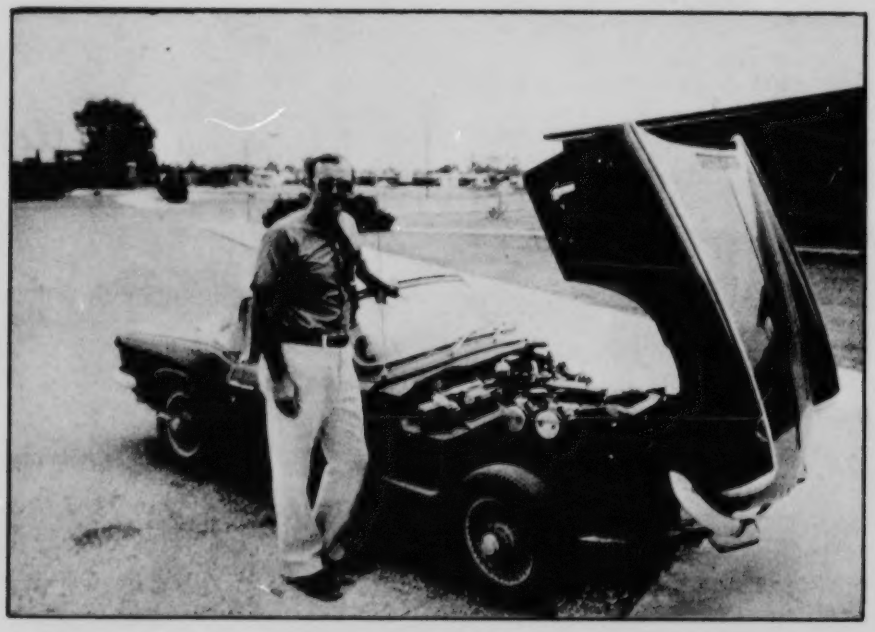
the past century. The growth of federal aid to education in Willcox from nothing to upwards of 20% of the yearly budget during the time of the project is evidence of this trend of nationalization in U.S. education. Part of the familiar pattern of organization in the Willcox schools was due to geographic mobility. Willcox was a crossroads town that attracted people from many other parts of the country. The 1970 census, for example, indicated that over half of the people in Willcox were from other states or countries. The non-native character of the community was reflected in the school system population even more than in the total population: over two-thirds of the teachers in the schools came from outside the state of Arizona. During the time of the project only one administrator had been raised in the general area of Willcox. The draw that Willcox held for educators from other parts of the country exemplified the mid-1970s shift in the U.S. population from the east and midwest to the "Sun Belt" states of the south and west. But, even though the ideas and personnel of the schools in Willcox were not indigenous to the community, residents readily accepted these and other "outsiders" who brought in needed resources to fuel the fires of demand created by living in an isolated, semi-arid environment.

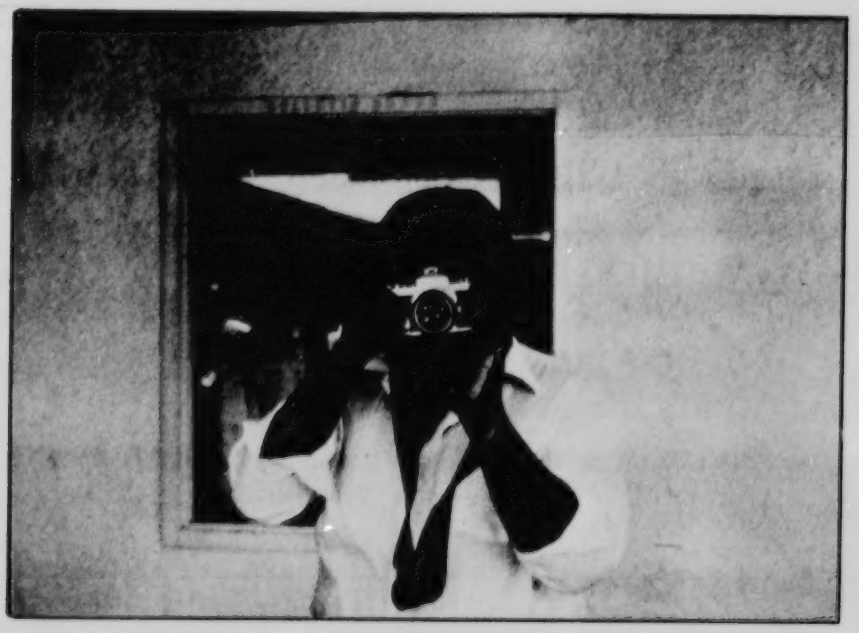
The federal program is a second major focus of this study. Seen in the broad sweep of history, the Rural Schools project itself was not a unique event in the development of the town. Rather, it was another example of how a small community reaches out and brings in outside people and expertise to make the community a better place in which to live. The people who developed the plans for the project, their successors who came in and implemented the components of the project, as well as evaluators and historians of the project like myself, tended to come from outside of Willcox.

Many project activities, such as bilingual education and pre-school education, were innovations derived from urban school districts. Because of this, the federal project in Willcox tended to draw people from cities. In this sense the project reversed for a time the traditional flow of educational personnel from smaller to larger school systems. But because the project was always considered to be based on "soft" or non-local money for the four years of implementation, few of the educators who came to Willcox made any attempt to stay there. Willcox and the federal project in the schools were seen as way stations along educational careers; the project was more often than not a stepping stone for administrators from cities who were concerned with improving their positions in the hierarchy of American education. In Gouldner's (1957) sense, the RSP attracted "cosmopolitans" at the expense of "locals."

The life history of the project illustrates something of change and stability in education. The Experimental Schools program was conceived as a dynamo for change that would affect not only the schools of rural America but the communities as well. The high level of funding and commitment to "comprehensive" changes that federal officials in Washington presented to local school systems was seen by some researchers as an "alternative of grandeur" (Smith and Keith 1971:ii) to the piecemeal attempts at change that had characterized educational innovations in the 1960s. The Experimental Schools program suggested that local projects should include a great deal of community participation in all aspects of education, decentralized decision making, and innovative components that would take advantage of local strengths and mitigate local weaknesses. But, to the consternation and sometimes anger of the federal officials assigned to watch over each project, the grand plans of comprehensive



The Experimental Schools project brought many people with cosmopolitan ideas into Willcox.



The media component of the project motivated many students to learn technical and artistic aspects of photography, graphics, and television.

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change were dropped in favor of the more pragmatic needs of local educators. Although participation in the Experimental Schools program offered Willcox the chance to try several new ideas such as pre-schools, community education classes, and bilingual-bicultural classroom organization, leveling forces such as changes in administrative leadership, the traditional spheres of influence of teachers and administrators, and community perceptions that the schools' business is best left to educators produced changes that were much more limited than those envisioned in the initial plans.

The emphasis on the community context in this study stresses the diversity of the town and the ability of residents there to operate in settings and networks beyond the confines of Willcox. It has become common in popular and scientific literature to think about small, rural communities as "closed," tradition bound, and hesitant to try things that are new or innovative (cf. Gross 1948, Redfield 1960, Hicks 1976). A myth of small-town America as being inherently conservative and exhibiting "old fashioned" values and customs has developed out of these and similar characterizations of rural life. In contrast to this myth, Willcox is progressive. The people of the community have historically looked to the outside world for innovations to keep the community alive and growing. The community is diverse in ethnicity, occupation, land use, language, and environment. This diversity has resulted in a readiness among residents to accept new ideas and technologies, as, for example, a solar powered irrigation pump that was built in 1906[2].

THE RURAL SCHOOLS PROJECT IN AN EXPERIMENTAL CONTEXT

The Willcox Rural Schools project was scheduled to begin implementation in August of 1973 after a year of planning. When my family and I arrived and met the new superintendent of schools, we found that he was quite suspicious of our intentions. The director of the Abt Associates study of the ten rural schools and I were introduced to the superintendent. After greeting us, he turned and said, "Let me tell you something. We don't want our children here being used as guinea pigs for any experiments!" This statement came as a surprise to the director and myself. I assured the superintendent that I would be doing descriptive or documentary research on how the project was brought into the community, not using children as "guinea pigs." Although the superintendent was satisfied that our research methods were designed to be descriptive and not manipulative, I was haunted for months with the memory of that first meeting. What kind of experiment did he think was being planned? Did he not understand the straightforward relationship between the government, the school district and the research company? Was he not the director of the local project? His angry statement only made sense to me several months later when I learned that the superintendent was new to the project, the schools, and the community. He, like many other people involved with this five-year project, only partially understood the complicated arrangement between a federal agency, ten small school systems, and a research corporation.

The superintendent had expressed concern over the "experimental" label on this new kind of federal intervention into local education. He had no idea what kind of experiments the federal government had in mind when it contracted with the school district to fund educational change. The term "experimental" was never fully understood at the local level of

the Willcox schools. Officials from Washington made speeches to the teachers about how lucky they were to be a part of this grand "experiment," Willcox administrators sent reports to the "Experimental Schools Division" of the National Institute of Education, but few people ever seemed to be able to define what was experimental about the project (Abt 1978a). If indeed the term had any referential value, it was lost in the early records of those who designed the program in Washington, D.C. By the time Willcox began implementing its local project, the term had entered into the special vocabulary or jargon of the administrators who ran the project in Willcox. As a part of a domain of similarly obscure words that made up the project jargon, the idea of an experiment taking place served more to delineate group boundaries than it did to refer to any commonly held conceptions about experiments. One way to understand the term "experimental" in this context, as well as other terms like "comprehensive changes" or "phase out," is as a sacred vocabulary. Like an archaic language used for religious purposes, the jargon of the project was not understood by participants, yet held intrinsic power through associations with non-local people and forces, in this case Washington officials. For example, it was considerably easier to persuade people to follow new school policy if the activity was linked in some way with the "experiment." If this vocabulary is thought of as "sacred," then the primacy of function over meaning in each word can be understood. The sacred quality of this vocabulary also points to the importance that these terms had for people communicating from one world (Willcox, Arizona) to another (Washington, D.C.). In short, this vocabulary was used to invoke the purported power of the non-local people as well as to communicate with them. During the course of the five years that the Willcox schools

attempted to implement educational change, local educators learned that the deities in Washington often had feet of clay; Washington officials often thought the same about residents of Willcox.

Willcox school officials first heard of the Experimental Schools program in the spring of 1972 when they received a letter from the U.S. Office of Education outlining this new program. The program was later transferred to the National Institute of Education, a new agency within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare whose job it was to bridge the gap between educational research and practice. The Experimental Schools program was considered one way of bridging the gap which separated educational theorists from educational practitioners.

One of the Willcox administrators who was present during the initial correspondence said that the program announcement from Washington, D.C. was thrown into the wastebasket by the superintendent. One of the principals took the crumpled letter home over the weekend and wrote an outstanding reply to the agency. The superintendent thought that the idea of five years and a million dollars for educational change was too preposterous for the small and relatively insignificant school district of Willcox. In addition, problems such as the necessity of busing half of the students to and from schools from outlying farms and ranches, discontent among district taxpayers, and outspoken teachers took up much of the superintendent's time. On the other hand, writing the letter of application was an enjoyable task for the middle school principal. The principal had received a doctorate in education and was well read in current programs of innovation in American schools. The letter of interest that the principal wrote provided a chance to organize some of the ideas and implement some of the innovations that she had read about in recent years.

The Willcox Rural Schools project was not, then, an experiment in the strict sense of a laboratory experiment, but was instead a different kind of educational program than had been traditionally supported by federal funds. Indeed, the term "experimental" was distasteful to Willcox school officials, so they quickly substituted a less sensitive term, "rural", for "experimental" in the title of their project. Even at the outset of the project, when the first letter of interest was sent from Willcox to Washington, a significant difference in the use of certain terminology existed between the two parties. The Experimental Schools program in Washington was at that time a part of the Office of Education. It was a large program that encompassed urban and rural school districts. The Rural Schools project in Willcox took its meaning from the wishes of one administrator who sought to bring changes into the school district. The project was also understood at this early stage to be a very good source of funds to supplement the school district budget.

DISCUSSION

Although Washington officials have stated that there will most likely never be another "Experimental Schools" program of the magnitude of the NIE-supported venture, this case study of the Willcox experience describes events and perceptions that have parallels in other policy contexts. The Experimental Schools program demonstrates that in cases like Willcox, the comprehensive, long-term strategy for improving local schools and their relationship to communities is fraught with difficulties. Although anthropologists such as Goodenough (1976) have noted that multicultural communities are very common throughout the world and the United States, programs of planned change which take multiculturalism into

account are relatively rare. Differing cultural backgrounds imply the need for several strategies for implementing policy so as to capitalize on the social variety found in such communities. Well-written plans are difficult to adapt to the contingencies of unanticipated changes in schools, especially when such changes are informed by and responsive to different cultural groups in the community. The grafting of new positions in a school or other institution while that same institution is facing demands for more cost accountability can appear frivolous to constituents who make no distinction between federal and local funds. Changes in personnel and leadership can leave projects with little guidance or sense of the original vision, especially when changes are planned to take place gradually over five years.

In the following chapter I describe the history and environment of the Willcox community and its school system. This review of several historic themes in the community places the project within the understandable framework of past efforts by Willcox residents to find outside resources and immigrants to make the semi-desert valley of Willcox a livable place. The second chapter describes the diversity of the present-day community of Willcox so that the strategies of project implementation can be understood. The third chapter examines the planning of the project in Willcox at a time when the project was an exciting federal grant in the Willcox schools. The fourth chapter traces the critical turning point when the plan became a reality, when the grant became a contract. The fifth chapter examines how the individuals who were brought in to staff the project made a place for change in the schools. The sixth chapter reviews the three years in which the project slowly lost the interest of residents and school administrators alike, and changed from a "project"

to a "problem." The seventh chapter summarizes this study of planned change in a small school district and suggests several policy and research implications.

Many ethnographic studies of education have concentrated on one community as if the community or its schools existed in isolation from other education agencies (see, for example, Ogbu 1974; Jackson 1968), while a few look beyond a school to a local bureaucracy such as a teacher-training college (Rist 1973). Studies on federal educational policy such as Smith and Keith's (1971) Anatomy of Educational Innovation or Wolcott's (1977) Teachers vs. Technocrats tend to focus on the impact of policy in schools, but not on federal-local interaction. The case of Willcox described here is analyzed from the standpoint of both school and community contexts. The description of the project is based on the assumption that local adaptations to federal policy are as much creative action as they are passive reaction. Under such conditions, federal-local relationships are bound to change as is the relationship of a school system to its community.

This study is descriptive in style and ethnographic in approach. Central to the analysis of this case is the assumption that the ideational world of participants in planned change, or to put it another way, their perceptions and interpretations of social structure and process, guides their actions. Every event during the course of the project, every strategy used to make the project successful, was based on the significance of past events and strategies in the minds of the participants. By describing such events in the long dialogue between Willcox and Washington I offer an interpretation of this project as it was perceived, and in this way take my theoretical cue from Clifford Geertz' (1973:30) notion that

the goal of an ethnographic study is the interpretation of events so as to enlarge human discourse.

This concern with how people structure reality is based on traditional and current work in anthropological linguistics such as that of Whorf (1957) and Sapir (1925), and more recently Spradley (1972) and Frake (1969). The field of ethnosemantics or cognitive anthropology focuses on the way people in speech communities give meaning to their physical and mental worlds. Such an ideational or "emic" approach, rather than a phenomenological or "etic" approach, is expanded here to give coherence to this study of the Experimental Schools project in Willcox. Although this study is not purely linguistic or semantic in construction, it focuses on Malinowski's (1961:24) dictum to report on the point of view people have about their behavior. This study of the Willcox Experimental Schools project examines how different points of view influenced the flow of events in the community.

The early excitement and later disillusionment with federally supported change in Willcox illustrates how human behavior expresses values that people hold and transfer to new experiences. Americans place a high value on the innovative, the revolutionary (Hsu 1977), or the new, and in consequence devalue the traditional or the old.[3] Perhaps this is why the project itself engendered so much excitement in its early days and later became something of an unwanted "senior citizen" in the Willcox schools, abandoned by those who once cherished it.

CHAPTER ONE. THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The history of Willcox as residents see it is a series of personal anecdotes. Willcox residents are proud of the Western frontier image of the town: one of the first historical anecdotes one is likely to hear in the town is that Wyatt Earp's brother was shot and buried in Willcox. Other personal anecdotes such as the escapades of the Chiricahua Apache leader Cochise or the "great Willcox train robbery," in which bandits are said to have placed a very large charge of dynamite on a safe and in this way blew away their profits, make up a corpus of oral history in the community. Many of the contemporary anecdotes revolve around the recording star Rex Allen who once lived in Willcox. For example, one such story relates how the bones of Rex's favorite horse, Koko, were sought for interment at the visitor's center when it was first opened. Residents wryly question whether the bones under the visitor's center plaque are really those of Koko or of some other animal.

The image that residents have of the history of the community focuses on individuals and how such people have succeeded (as in the case of Rex Allen) or failed (as in the case of the train robbers) in using outside resources to their advantage. This personalistic and outward-directed view of history is manifest even in the naming of the community: in August of 1880, General Orlando B. Willcox rode into the railroad camp called "Maley" on the first Southern Pacific train to cross the Sulphur Springs Valley (Elliot 1884:242). In honor of this event, the camp was renamed for the general, and the modern history of the "city" of Willcox began.

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Throughout its history, Willcox has had literate citizens who have spoken well of the community. By 1912, a booklet entitled "Why Willcox?" was sponsored by the town, and the author began by stating,

> The citizens of Willcox take pleasure in sending out this little booklet to acquaint you somewhat with the beauty of the scenery, excellency of the climate, richness of the soil, abundance of water and a few other facts which combine to make this valley the most favored section for investigation by the tourist, investor, and home builder (Anderson, 1912:1).

A recent (1972) community prospectus describes the community in a more straightforward style, but with a similar intent:

> Willcox, Arizona is located in southeast Arizona adjacent to Interstate Highway 10, 52 miles west of the New Mexico state line, and 80 miles east of Tucson. At an elevation of 4167', Willcox lies in the North Central part of the Sulphur Springs Valley and is the dominant community of northern Cochise County. The Sulphur Springs Valley, nearly 100 miles long and 15 miles wide, is the core of a wide agricultural area with the City of Willcox acting as its trade and service center. . . . Willcox has been planning for improvement, and achieving it, for approximately 90 years (Arizona Department of Economic Planning and Development 1972:1).

A sense of pride combined with a continual effort to attract economic growth have characterized Willcox's view of itself through the years.

This chapter describes the environmental and historical setting of contemporary Willcox in the 1970s. The stark beauty of the high valley of Willcox has been an important reason why people have worked hard to attract financial resources to the community. The area is also rich in natural resources and has been used since Spanish times for mining and ranching. Although the environment around Willcox is vast and semi-arid, residents and newcomers have found an attraction to the area that has resulted in a sense of "place," a feeling that, with effort, the heat, the lack of rain, and isolation can be overcome. The present configuration of the Willcox community has been shaped and formed by different

adaptations that people have made in order to live in the Willcox area. This chapter will review the physical characteristics of the environment; adaptations such as mining, farming, ranching, and tourism that people have made; and the development of a multicultural community in Willcox.

Such a review of the social and historical trends in Willcox provides a context for understanding the events of its Experimental Schools project, since the interest in such an ambitious program of educational change was not an exception to the way people in Willcox used non-local resources, but rather fit its historical pattern. Why Willcox was chosen as the site for a federal project, in other words, was not so much the result of decisions made from afar, but of a very calculated and familiar pattern of local community action. Furthermore, the history of Willcox indicates why the project had difficulty in becoming an established part of the culture of the community: activities similar to this federal educational program had come and gone before the Rural Schools project was initiated, and residents had a sense that other opportunities for involvement in similar programs or projects would develop after this project was long forgotten. The project was brought into a community with a history as the crossroads of a westward route to California and a southward route to Mexico and thus, a history of diversity. Outsiders and their ideas are quickly incorporated into the social activities of the community, but can just as easily be forgotten once they leave. Seen in the light of the social history of the community, the Rural Schools project was a very interesting event in the lives of Willcox residents, although not without precedent or probable sequel.

While the goal of this study is in part signified by the phrase "Why Willcox?" it is also signified by the phrase "What is Willcox?" Here the emphasis will be on answering the "why" through looking at the "what": What the community is from the geographic standpoint, what the historical trends have been in the early days of settlement as well as the more recent days of modern Willcox, what the people have been like, what they do to make a living, to interact socially, and to carry out the myriad activities which make up their lives.

Througnout this volume there is reference to "the Willcox community." This appellation refers both to a geographic and to a social unit. The geographic center of the Willcox community is the city of Willcox (see Fig. 1-1); it is the center for many social activities of the area (churches, markets, and schools). The outer boundaries of the community are less precise. In part they correspond to the school district boundaries, but can extend and contract depending on the activity or range of travel that community members make. For example, some members of the Willcox community live entirely within the city limits. They work within the city limits, market there, and have occasion to go outside the city only on trips to the nearby city of Tucson (85 miles to the west) or the marketing center of Safford (45 miles to the north). Other community members live outside of the city limits and are acquainted with the hinterlands that surround the city, through working on ranches or farms. For them, the geographic boundaries of the community extend through the farming areas of the Kansas Settlement and the Stewart District, and also through the ranching areas beyond these farming areas. To these people, the Willcox community corresponds to the Sulphur Springs Valley. The particular definition of the

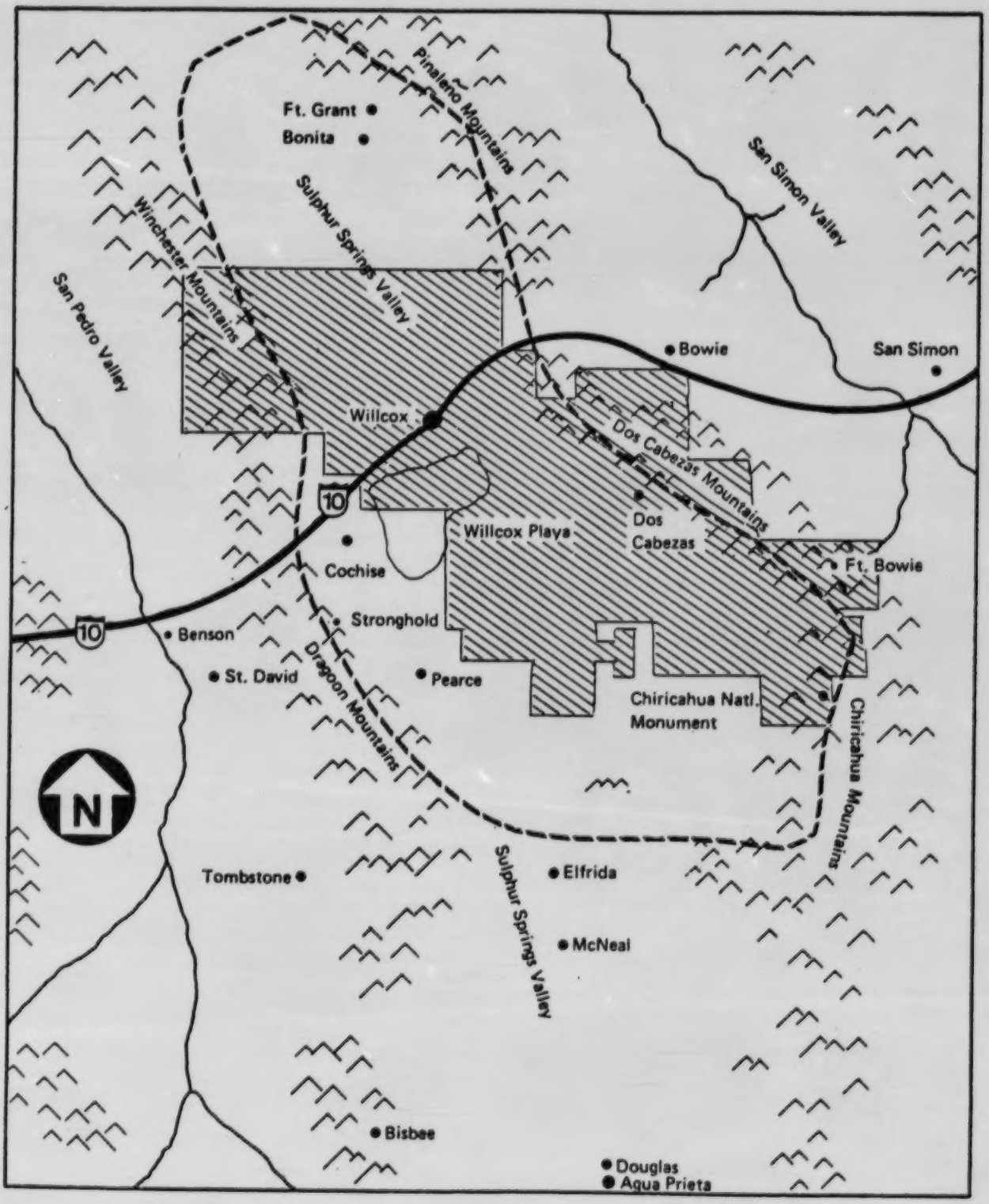

Figure 1-1 The area around Willcox, Arizona

School District Boundary.

Willcox Drainage Area.

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Willcox "community," then, depends on the variables of 1) the individual or group one is discussing, 2) the activities of that group (economic, social, etc.) and 3) the past history of the area within which the community is located. These variables will become more explicit through the social and economic conditions which have shaped the community. It is not necessary to come to a geographic or social definition of the Willcox community which will satisfy all individuals under all activity conditions throughout the community's history. Instead, through understanding some of the possible limits of the Willcox community, the reader can better appreciate the forces which pull, push, and shove the community today, for each of the forces is felt from a different place within the community.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF WILLCOX

> The climate is superb. World travelers concede it to surpass California, the Mediterranean sections, and Northern Africa. Its altitude of 4,000 feet tempers the summer heat and the southern latitude eliminates the winter. The dry, pure atmosphere, blue skies, sunlight and moonlight, the southern breeze, the cool and refreshing nights, the absence of death dealing tempests and rude northern blasts combine to make conditions as nearly perfect as can be obtained. In the soft waters is found a panacea for kidney and liver disorders. With the health giving water combined with the dry and crisp atmosphere, rheumatism will vanish, and pulmonary trouble cease to exist, and shattered nerves are fully restored. The dream of the mystics who for centuries ago longingly gazed over the Western Seas for the enchanted land, where sparkled the fountains of perpetual youth, have at last been partially realized (Anderson, 1912:5).

People are both products and shapers of their environment. In the language of the ecologist, mankind's "niche" consists of most of the terrestrial world, with the exception of the polar regions. But while it is humanly possible to adapt to almost any geographic and climatic

condition, the adaptation is not without consequences. The semi-arid desert basin of the Sulphur Springs Valley affects the way people make a living, how they construct their homes, and what they do during their leisure time. In the words of a contemporary resident of the area, one has to understand the fact that Willcox is located in a basin and the lives of the residents are inextricably linked to that fact: "This basin is like a sink without a drain. People tend to stagnate in the middle of it if they're not careful."

The area around Willcox has been shaped by people as well. Old-timers tell about the once-fertile grasslands of the valley, so high that they reached "up to the belly of a horse." Photographs of the area taken in the late 1800s show running streams coming down from the mountains (Hastings & Turner 1965). The nearby San Pedro River, which bisects Benson, ran all year round at the time that Willcox was settled. Since that time, over-grazing of the ranges, extensive irrigation, and a small earthquake in the late 1880s have resulted in the present-day desert appearance of the region.

But people's influence has not been all negative. Watering tanks and irrigation ditches built by ranchers and farmers have enticed large numbers of bird and other animal life into the area. More deer and antelope are present in the valley because of the increase in surface water.

In the time of the Mid-Tertiary, a geologic period some 60 million years ago, the contours of the present-day Sulphur Springs Valley began to take shape (see Fig. 1-1). As this epoch of dramatic geologic change began, the area around what is now Willcox was flat and desolate. The

edge of the ancient Western Sea reached within 60 miles of the area. Large-scale faulting and uplifting during this period created the mountain ranges which ring the valley (Schreiber et al. 1972).

To the north, the Pinaleño Mountains arose. Of these, Mt. Graham rose up to the height of 10,713 feet, 6,500 feet above the valley floor. Mt. Graham remains the highest of the surrounding peaks. To the south and slightly to the east of the Pinaleños, the Dos Cabezas Mountains were formed (elevation 8,363 feet). The Dos Cabezas ("Two Heads"), so named for the two prominent granite peaks which serve as a familiar landmark in the area, are the closest mountains to the town of Willcox.

The region has been drying up for 10,000 years. This trend is coupled with the retreat of the last major glaciation of the continent, the Wisconsin. But it would be helpful here to stop for a minute and review what the Willcox basin might have looked like at that time, for 10,000 years ago was the eve of man's entrance into the valley.

The climate of the Sulphur Springs Valley was cooler and wetter than it is today. Rainfall was probably twice what it is today (12 inches per year), and the average annual temperature was probably in the 40s rather than in the high 50s as it is today. Pine forest covered the valley floor as well as the mountain slopes. The lake itself, into which ran the many streams coming down from the mountains, was long and wide, and averaged 35 feet deep. Schreiber et al. (1972:172) estimate its width at that time to be 11.3 miles and its length to be 20 miles. Because the valley floor was generally flat, numerous swamps and ponds dotted the landscape.

The Willcox area today has little resemblance to the same area 10,000 years ago. The mountains still ring the valley, the Dry Lake is

still a major feature of the drainage basin, but the climate has changed immensely and with it the biotic features of the landscape.

Lake Cochise is now only a mirage occasionally seen from the highways that surround it. Sometimes water does collect on the old lake bed, but seldom stays longer than a few weeks to a month. The lake is now a flat expanse of crusted clay and powdery dune estimated to be about four feet lower than the original lake bed. The dry winds of the spring months have blown much of the surface away through the years (Schreiber et al. 1972:181). The rest of the valley floor is devoted to range land and farming, two types of land utilization which have affected the vegetation cover drastically. When the area was settled in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the range land was lauded as one of the richest in the country. By 1890, the area supported some 1.5 million head of cattle (Schultz 1964:51). But over-grazing and the resultant erosion of much of the land have changed the grasslands to a more scrub-dominated vegetation. The mesquite, which previously had been confined to river bottoms, was carried by cattle across the valley floor. Quickly adapting to the new environment, mesquite flourished at such a rate as to choke off the natural regeneration of the grasses. Proper range management has been accomplished in parts of the valley, and the areas around the old Hooker ranch to the north and the Riggs ranch to the south provide an indication of the once-rich grazing land that was found before the turn of the century.

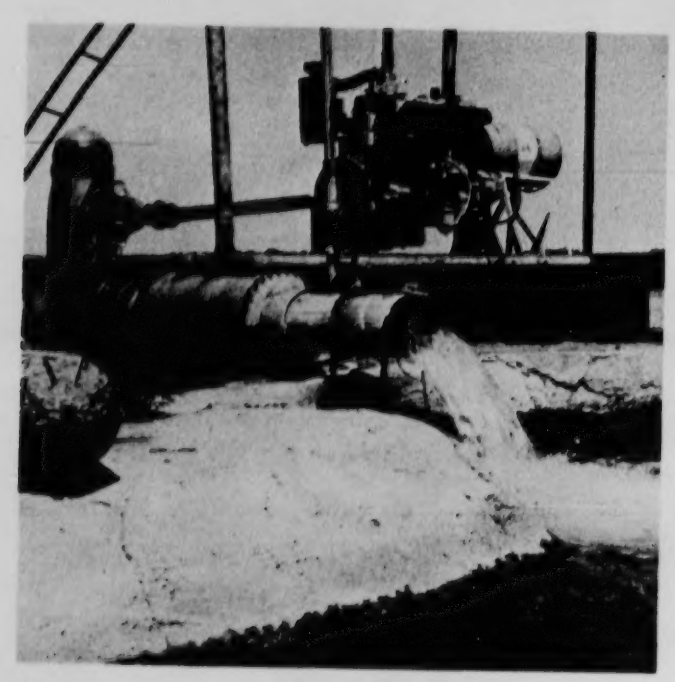
Farming has also drastically changed the vegetation of the valley floor. Although some dry farming was attempted in the period of 1905-1910, irrigation quickly took over and changed much of the area into profitable farmland. It is estimated that up to 140,000 acres of the

basin are now being farmed through the use of extensive irrigation. Areas which were once thought of as "no man's lands"--too poor to raise cattle on--are now producing lettuce, sorghum, maize, and cotton. An aerial view of the valley today underscores the dramatic effect on the area that recent agriculture has brought. Bright green fields of crops contrast sharply with the surrounding semi-arid desert vegetation.

The warm temperatures and low humidity of the area have attracted many people from more temperate climates in recent years. Retirement communities have sprung up to the south (Sunsites, Arizona), and others are planned or are being developed immediately to the east and to the southeast of the city of Willcox.

The moderate temperature and low rainfall may be an attraction to retirees, but these two aspects of the climate have at times caused problems for the ranching industry. The rainfall is irregular; some years may be very wet, while others are very dry. Most of the rain falls in the winter months of November and December and in the summer months of July and August. When one of these two seasons does not produce rain, the growth of range grasses and cattle suffers accordingly. When the rainfall is insufficient, cattle often turn to prickly pear cactus for forage, which results in serious sickness.

The other major variable in the climate of the area is the wind. Southerly winds bring the summer rains, which can be quite intense. During the months of March, April, and May, southwesterly winds gust up to 40 mph, raising huge clouds of dust in the air. The sand from the Dry Lake is carried up and blown across the valley farming areas to the south of the city, often obscuring the surrounding mountains and creating dust storms which can be dangerous for highway travel.



An irrigation pump. While dry farming has been practiced in the past, irrigation is now used the supplement the annual rainfall.

Cattle grazing is difficult during the spring dry season.

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But as might be expected, the finite quantity of water has become increasingly important to farmers and ranchers in the area over the years. Water levels in some areas have dropped as much as 46 feet a decade (Schultz 1964:96). The lower limit of the water tables in the Willcox area is often high in fluorides, unusable in its natural form for domestic purposes. But the hydrologic situation in the Willcox basin is highly variable. Some areas have very steady and unfailing wells while others suffer dramatic drops in the water strata each year. The water supply for the city of Willcox has also been a problem for the residents. The older city wells were very high in fluoride content, which resulted in stained teeth and other dental problems. In the early 1970s, after years of working with the wells located within the city, new wells were purchased to the north of the town, approximately eight miles away. The water from these wells has a low flouride content and is felt to be well suited for the city's future growth.

The availability of water and its quality continue to be very important in the area, more so than the more common minerals such as copper and silver which held so much importance in the first periods of settlement. With the new system installed in the early 1970s, the city now has an adequate supply of water to last it many years. The good water has not yet, however, served as an inducement for the location of any light industries in the city, the hope of many residents.

Water in the farming areas continues to be used at ever increasing rates because of the larger acreages under cultivation. Higher prices for grain and other crops in the last few years have induced farmers to reinvest their capital in more efficient pumping and irrigation systems.

But with this efficiency, the supply of water in the ground continues to be depleted. Farmers and ranchers are trying to conserve this resource by careful planning, but the risk of depletion remains high. The water base of the area goes back to the last great glacial period of North America. Given the present rates of water level decline, the loss of this base could take place in a geologic instant.

The area of the Willcox basin has many different geologic and climatic features. Although the flat valley floor contrasts sharply with the granite-hewn mountains which surround it, a closer look reveals many intermediate life zones, each with unique floral and faunal assemblages. In the eyes of contemporary as well as earlier residents, the area is simply beautiful. This natural beauty of the area is one of extremes. The Willcox Playa is almost barren of any vegetation. Its flat, crusted surface appears to be almost a frozen remnent of a past geologic age. The pine-covered Chiricahua Mountains offer an opposite extreme in environmental conditions. Their unusual rock formations, including balancing boulders, columnar faces, and volcanic flows, provide majestic examples of other geologic forces, mixed in with cool coniferous forests.

The impressions left by man on this environment have only added to the number of scenic areas which contemporary residents regularly visit. To the west of the city of Willcox, on the other side of the Dry Lake, the Butterfield Stage Depot of Dragoon Springs is located in the desert grassland life zone. Further south is Cochise Stronghold, a wooded chaparral zone with granite outcroppings, utilized as a natural fortification by Apache Indians in early historic times. Southeast of Willcox are the Dos Cabezas Mountains. Mining activities in these mountains brought the first settlers to the area, and the mining camps nestled in the canyons

and uplands of these mountains still draw many people for outings and picnics. Apache Pass and the historic Fort Bowie are also to the southeast of the city. Fort Bowie, now a national historic park, served as a market for many early settlers and ranchers. These and other areas, including many abandoned mining towns (ghost towns), provide present-day residents with opportunities to engage in a dialogue with the environment even if they are not tied to it for direct economic livelihood, as are the ranchers and the farmers.

The variety in natural and cultural aspects of the geographic setting of Willcox is manifest in the system of land ownership in the area. Within the Willcox school district, six separate categories of land ownership are found. The first category, private ownership, encompasses most of the valley floor. The second category is land administered by the U.S. Department of Defense, and is found in the Willcox Playa or Dry Lake. The Playa served as a bombing range during World War II. Today, it is not used for bombing practice, although army personnel from Fort Huachuca, located 70 miles southwest of Willcox, use it for ground maneuvers. The third category of land ownership includes state-owned land found as one leaves the valley floor and begins to climb into the lower mountains. This state-owned land, plus the fourth category, federal land administered by the Bureau of Land Management, is often leased to ranchers and farmers. The fifth category, land managed by the National Forest Service, is found in the mountains surrounding the valley. Much of this land is used for cattle grazing and is leased to ranchers for that purpose. A portion of the Chiricahua National Forest makes up the sixth category of ownership, National Park Service land. The Wonderland of Rocks National Park was dedicated in 1924. Today its campgrounds and hiking trails draw local

and out-of-town tourists during the warmer months of the year. It is a monument to the powers of wind and erosion which have created huge balancing boulders of granite. With a little imagination, it is easy to see the likenesses of animals, people, and other unusual forms in the rocks which make up the monument.

The geography, geology, and ecology of the region have not been and are not always pleasant. But the sheer variety of these features has forced residents of the Sulphur Springs Valley to adapt in many different ways. Ranching, farming, and mining are obvious exploitations of the environment which are important in the area. But also important are the subtle adaptations of a changing history represented by the railroads, conflicts with the Indian populations, and service economies. The political geography of the area is an important and often overlooked factor as well. The Mexican border is 75 miles to the south of Willcox. As is pointed out in the next section, the region has strong ties to the country of which the Sulphur Springs Valley was once a part. Cattle and the cowboy, maize and squash, place names and personal names have all resulted from activities first carried out in Mexico. The give-and-take of cultural communication, resulting from this proximity to the border, has influenced the development of the valley.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE WILLCOX COMMUNITY

When the application for a town site was filed by the founders of Willcox in 1881, provisions were made for churches and schools. The application included setting aside "one block for school purposes; also four lots each for the Methodist, Baptist, Catholic, and Presbyterian churches" (Schultz 1964:19). Religious observance was thus very important

in the early settlement of the town, and churches provided leadership in civic affairs as they do even today, particularly now that there are 17 churches in the community.

The first school was built in 1881, soon after the town site was declared legal. This school was ungraded; the first grammar school was established in 1885 with 39 students. By 1889 it enrolled between 50 and 60 pupils (Schultz 1964:33). Other grammar schools sprang up in surrounding communities like Dos Cabezas and Cochise. In 1890 a new four-room building was built with the help of a $7,500 bond issue, and in 1908 high school classes for seven students were held in this building; the next year, there were 13 students (Black, 1940:54). The school population grew; by 1911 a new high school was built on El Paso Avenue and enrolled 21 students. By 1912 there were 37 high school students; in 1914, 39 students; and in 1922, 108 students (ibid.). Kindergarten was probably added to the school in 1911.

Schools were financed through the property tax. This meant that in the early days the Southern Pacific Railroad contributed a major share (i.e., more than 50 percent) of the schools' revenue, with other taxable property, such as ranches and mines, making up the remainder.

According to early residents, the schools served as a "civilizing" force in the town: the schools hired teachers, most of them women who then married local businessmen or ranchers. This trend continued and resulted in a high respect for schools and education in this early period of Willcox's history.

Although the community was proud of its school system, it was also aware of its difficulties. One problem was that there were two different cultural groups, the Anglo American and the Mexican American, in the same school system. As early as 1930 the difficulty which Anglo

Americans experienced in teaching Mexican Americans was recognized. The attitude of the school system toward Mexican Americans was expressed in a report written in 1932: "The Latin American, strongly Indian in his composition, subjected by years of servitude and influenced by superstition, needs particular sympathy and understanding" (Larsen 1932:13). The problem of cultural differences was strongly compounded by the language barrier, as the school system realized. "Understanding Spanish helps in the appreciation of Spanish people" (ibid.:73) In addition, the fact that few local people returned to the community to teach and that most teachers were recruited from outside the area may have added to the difficulties of teaching in a bicultural region. Larsen noted that there were four Mexicans enrolled in the high school in 1932.

Both educational and commercial leadership were divided between the early residents who had been influential in developing service businesses and the ranching families. The school board maintained a balance between local businessmen and rancher/farmers throughout the years. In the community, the Riggs family continued to be important. Although the bank which they started in 1915 was sold to the Valley National Bank of Tucson in 1936, the economic and social leadership that this family exercised in the town as well as in the ranching community did not diminish.

The current quantity of service organizations was also established during the early period of Willcox's history. Before 1900, the Masons, Ancient Order of United Workmen, and Knights of Pythias had been formed (Schultz 1964:35). The Willcox Board of Trade was established in 1908, developing later into the Willcox Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture. This Board of Trade carried on a campaign of public relations for the town and the Valley between 1908 and 1915; the booklet referred to earlier, "Why Willcox?" (Anderson 1912), was one of its products.

All in all, Willcox was well prepared for township status in 1915. It already had a newspaper, the Arizona Range News (still published today), telephone service, a number of banks, electricity, and numerous businesses. A beer-bottling factory was in operation, bottling some 1,000 bottles of beer a day (Schultz 1964:23).

The hinterlands of the town were likewise developing an underlying strength built on diversity as Willcox came into existence. Ranching was the first important adaptation to the area and proved highly successful in the grasslands of the valley. In addition, some agriculture was practiced. For instance, Colonel Hooker raised corn and sorghum as well as some garden crops on acreage close to his ranch headquarters (Forbes 1913:214). Hooker diverted flood waters from mountain runoffs to irrigate these fields, and economically used the water that ran off the lower end of the fields to irrigate some pasture land. The Hooker ranch sought to be as self-sufficient as possible in the early days of its history, and this attitude of self-determination persisted through the later history of the ranch.

Other farms were started in the area previous to 1900, many by miners discouraged at the low return on their prospecting adventures. But the most dramatic introduction of commercial agriculture came to the valley in 1905 and 1906, when record rainfall lured large numbers of farmers from the midwest into the area south of Willcox. This area soon became known as "Kansas Settlement," as most of the new residents came from that state. Through a combination of heavy rains and homesteading legislation, these settlers quickly filled up the area around the edge of the dry lake and began farming without irrigation. Scant rainfall in 1910 and succeeding years convinced most of these settlers that dry farming was not practicable in the valley. Agricultural bulletins from

the University of Arizona extension office underlined this fact (Thompson and Gray 1925). A number of these Kansas settlers left after 1910, and their abandoned windmills have since become the sites of water tanks for the ranchers who reclaimed the area.

But many of the Kansas settlers stayed on and, experimenting with supplemental well and flood irrigation as well as crops suited to the hot climate, expanded the agricultural base of the community. County figures for 1910 indicate that 2,500 acres of land were under irrigation and another 45,000 acres were dry farmed (Bakarich 1958:14). The majority of this farmland in the county was within the Willcox basin.

The third important adaptation to the environment of the Valley which strengthened the base of the community was mining. Silver was first claimed in Cochise County in the 1850s (McCool 1967:4), and through the 1870s and 1880s, the mountains surrounding the valley were prospected. From this activity Tombstone was born, 40 miles to the southwest of Willcox. In 1878 the first mining claim was registered for the Juniper Mine at Dos Cabezas (Schultz 1964:73), and in that same year the first schoolhouse of Cochise County was built in the fledgling town of Dos Cabezas (Black 1940:18). After the railroad was completed through the Valley, mining operations developed in earnest, as the ore could be economically shipped to smelting plants in other parts of the state. Mines were dug in all of the mountains surrounding the valley. The towns of Pearce, Gleason, Courtland, Johnson, and Dos Cabezas suddenly came into being, forming a wheel around the hub of Willcox.

A fourth outlying activity which added to the early diversity of the Willcox area was supplying the nearby federal forts. Fort Grant and Fort Bowie received supplies through the town of Willcox, and the

Schwertner house which still stands today was built as a way station for officers traveling to these forts.

The end of World War II began the most recent period of the history of the Willcox community. This last period has been one of rapid growth, both in population and in the economic base of the community. In the early 1960s a new influence appeared in the community: the development of retirement communities and land development. These changes plus the opening of Interstate Highway 10 brought Willcox into the 1970s.

In 1950, the population of the town of Willcox was 1,266 (Arizona Department of Economic Planning and Development 1973) and by 1965, a special census of the town showed the population to be 3,018 (Arizona Range News 1965, No. 36). With the increase in population, the services of the town increased accordingly. A hospital was built in 1951 (Schultz 1964:115), and by 1968 a new hospital, the Northern Cochise Community Hospital, was built with a $700,000 bond issue (Arizona Range News 1968, No. 24). A radio station began broadcasting in 1959. The railroad began passenger service to the community in 1961, but discontinued it after a few years. Greyhound and Trailways bus lines began stopping regularly, providing yet another transportation link to the rest of the country. In 1957, the town went to a city manager-council type of government and since then has annexed large tracts of land surrounding the town for future development.

Ranching remained constant during this period of Willcox's history. During 1940, the number of beef cattle in the county was 93,000, but by 1958 had only risen to 96,000 (Bakarich 1958:33). In 1970, the number of beef cattle was slightly over 68,000 (Arizona Agriculture Bulletin 1971).

That the total number of beef cattle did not increase should not be taken as an indication of the decline of the cattle industry. Since the Second World War, two feedlots have been built in the area, and two livestock auction barns have been in operation in Willcox. Auction owners estimate that some 50,000 head of cattle are shipped out of Willcox yearly. The cattle industry has leveled off in terms of the number of cattle on the range but, through better range management, more efficient breeding practices, and improving market conditions, the industry has remained very healthy.

Farming has experienced tremendous growth since the end of the Second World War. Irrigated acreage has increased from 12,000 acres in 1945 to over 127,000 acres in 1971 (Arizona Agriculture Bulletin 1945, 1972). After the end of the war, agriculture increasingly became commercially successful as first cotton, then lettuce and sugar beets, began to be grown in quantity in the area. In the mid-1960s a group of farmers from western Texas began settling the area of the town of Willcox (the Stewart District). Although much of their land is outside of Cochise County, this influx of new farmers shows up as a jump of over 25,000 irrigated acres for Cochise County between 1966 and 1967 (ibid. 1967, 1968).

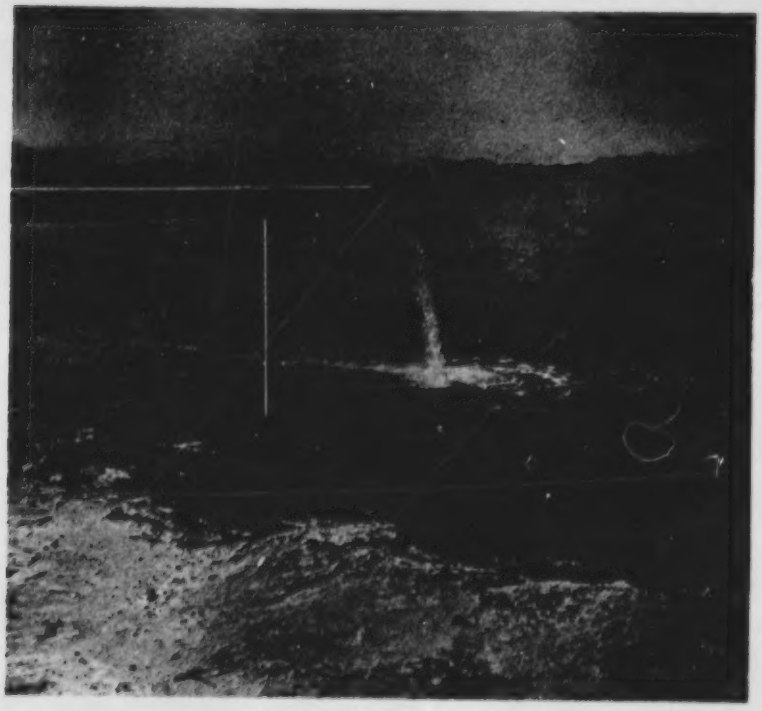
Support industries developed in the town along with this increase in farming activity. Two lettuce processing plants located in the town and began processing up to 200 carloads of lettuce a day or, two-thirds of the nation's daily demand, in the late 1950s (Schultz 1964:96). In the 1960s, an irrigation pipe manufacturing company was located in the town, as well as many small businesses specializing in pump installation, repair, and maintenance. In the farming areas, grain storage plants, chemical fertilizer plants and a meat packing plant began operating during this period.

Retirement communities, first introduced into the area in the late 1950s, have come to be important to Willcox. By far the most successful is Arizona Sunsites, located about 35 miles southwest of the town, near the old mining town of Pearce. As of 1970, some 300 homes had been constructed in the community. Other land development schemes have not fared as well as Arizona Sunsites. One, the Twin Lakes development, located immediately to the south of Willcox, is reminiscent of the early mining speculations that occurred in the Dos Cabezas area. During 1968 and 1969 when the development was underway, planeloads of prospective buyers from Illinois and Ohio flew in to look at the investment properties (Arizona Range News 1970, No. 30). A restaurant and a nine-hole golf course were constructed, and streets were laid out for future populations. Unfortunately, the water supply of the area was not potable, and development has been declining since this fact became apparent in the early 1970s. The development firm changed hands in an effort to improve the investment, but by 1975 had not met with success.

There have been other attempts to create retirement developments within the Willcox basin during this period, but with the majority of them it is too early to predict their eventual success or failure. If they do succeed, they will add another outlying population which the community will service.

State and national governmental operations have also expanded in the community during this latter period. In the southern part of the basin, the Chiricahua National Monument was established in 1924. In 1975, the Monument employed a park ranger, a naturalist, a geologist, and other maintenance and administrative personnel. In the town of Willcox

The Twin Lakes development was built at the southern edge of the city of Willcox.



Water from deep underground wells is used to fill the lake of Twin Lake Estates.

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itself are located a number of U.S. government agencies. These include the Farmers Home Administration, the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committee, the Small Business Administration, the Soil Conservation Service, the Forest Service office, and the Immigration Border Patrol. Because of the variety of agencies, the governmental influence in the community is widespread. No military agencies are located in the community, although as noted, the Willcox Playa was used as a bombing range during World War II. It is still listed on the official state maps as the "Willcox Dry Lake Bombing Range," and remains under governmental control.

State agencies which have located in the community in the last 20 years include a Highway Department maintenance station, a State Employment office, and the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension office and Community Development office.

Although the economic benefits of the influence of governmental agencies is often stressed, it should be pointed out that the agencies have a social effect as well. They bring to the community a number of employees and their families with broad national outlooks because of their experiences of working in many parts of the country. The effects of the presence of these agencies and offices cut across most of the economic and social groupings of the community: some are concerned with agriculture and ranching, others with community progress, still others with business and financial development. The Immigration Border Patrol watches for illegal crossings of the international border, while the staffs at the National Monument and Fort Bowie Historic Site cater to the ever increasing tourist or short-term resident population of the area.

The major trends of this last period of the history of the Willcox community have been the growth of agriculture, the increase in social, religious and health facilities of the town of Willcox, and the increasing numbers of new residents. Transportation remains vital to the community, and the routing of Interstate Highway 10 through the town has resulted in a widening of the market and leisure-time horizons of the residents.

Because of the ease with which the community can be reached, new populations have entered the area. Seasonal residents--usually retired couples who have purchased homes either in the community or in the outlying development communities--are becoming more numerous in the area. Tourists, the most transient of the seasonal residents, are considered a major market for service businesses. Motels, gasoline stations, restaurants, and trailer parks have sprung up to meet the needs of these populations.

Throughout the history of Willcox, diversity in the economic, social, and cultural systems of the surrounding area has contributed to the overall strength of the community. This diversity, coupled with a strong consciousness of the community, has overcome the national trend of the decline of the small town. The number of new influences which have affected the town throughout its history, and the retention of some basic patterns of community life are striking: mining, dry farming, ranching, communications, irrigation farming, service industry, and land development have all had periods of growth and decline during the history of Willcox. Governmental activities, whether they involve the army, land management, or community service, have provided markets for the town and have provided avenues for the dissemination of new ideas and life patterns.

Willcox has become, over the years, what one new resident described as a "sophisticated rural community," some of whose residents have been in Arizona only a few short years, while others can trace their ancestry to the first Spanish or United States settlers in the area. Given the diversity of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds in Willcox, it is not surprising that cattle ranchers play golf with gas station owners on the greens of the country club. It was through such associations that a loosely articulated "elite" of the community took shape, recognizing that they shared common goals of bringing outside capital and resources to the area despite their differences in upbringing and occupation. If Willcox was to remain sophisticated, it needed to provide services, recreational facilities, communication channels and economic vitality in order to continue attracting and utilizing the input of immigrants from other parts of the country.

The Rural Schools project provided one such opportunity. While many long-term residents resented the potential encroachment of governmental activities in the form of regulations, red tape, and impersonal exchanges, they nonetheless acknowledged several valuable aspects of a project that would bring federal dollars, new professionals, and new ideas into the schools. This group of successful, civic-minded residents were not the only significant group of people in Willcox, however. They formed one kind of a community, a "civic" community, that neither contained all of the residents of Willcox, nor completely articulated the culture and social structure of the larger community on whose behalf they had initiated involvement with yet another external force.

CHAPTER TWO. THE SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY STRUCTURE OF WILLCOX

What is Willcox? This volume has already noted the variety of influences which have shaped the town into its present configuration. Willcox continues to look like different things to different people. It is, by self-proclamation, the "Cattle Capital of the Country." To some, this constant presence of ranching defines Willcox as a "western" or "cow town." The annual Rex Allen Days festival, initiated in 1952, stresses the western, cowboy image of the town. As one observer put it, Willcox has "a unique linkage of present and very 'real' western culture with the national myth of the cowboy, expressed in the form of a community-wide festival" (McLeneghan and Stone 1961:22).

Willcox, including the surrounding areas, is more than the ideal of this one occupational group. Although the mystique or "culture" of the cowboy is often used as a rallying point or identifying mark of the community, the other forces of the different occupations, nationalities, trading patterns, and land ecology make up Willcox as well. Not everyone is a cowboy, although he or she may appear to be one during the annual Rex Allen Days festival. The strength of the community is in its diversity, rather than in adherence to one way of making a living over all others.

This chapter provides an analysis of the community, first from the standpoint of demographic characteristics and social groups, and then from the various perspectives of its residents.

SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The social structure of Willcox is egalitarian in ideal. There is no commonly understood class system, as success in any economic pursuit

is considered justification enough for being considered a member of an amorphous network of "power figures" in the community. People in Willcox group themselves and organize their time according to a plethora of voluntary associations and churches, occupations, and ethnic affiliations.

The major social division in the community is based on ethnicity: Mexican Americans have lived in one section of town, known as the "barrio" (neighborhood) since the town came into being. People from other ethnic groups such as Blacks or Native Americans also tend to find their first housing in this area, as property values in the barrio tend to be lower than in other parts of town. Differences between Mexican Americans and Anglos are not phrased along racial lines. Instead, ethnicity is dependent on self-identification, language, and circumstance. No longer are Mexican Americans segregated from community activities and institutions. Most Mexican Americans in Willcox today speak English as fluently as they do Spanish, have high educational aspirations for their children, and take pride in their contributions to the social and political life of the community. But ethnicity continues to be an important force in the community. Mexican Americans are still rarely represented in the ranks of teachers in the schools or in those voluntary associations controlled by successful Anglos. Willcox has not been isolated from a growing awareness of ethnicity, and Mexican American students have demonstrated pride in their heritage by staging celebrations such as El Dia de la Raza, "the day of the people" during the school year.

The common characteristic of the population picture of Willcox and the surrounding area is the steady growth it has experienced over the last 40 years. The official population for the town itself in 1970 was

2,550 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1973). This is below the 3,000-person figure of 1965 (Arizona Range News 1965, No. 36), and common understanding in the town is that the official census figures were low. But this relatively small population is indicative only of the town itself. The surrounding area contains far more people. The 1970 population count for the school district was 4,435. The school district line stops at the top of Cochise County for political reasons, even though the "trade area" of the community extends farther. Willcox is the major town within a 50-mile radius, and estimates place the number of people affected by the trade of Willcox to be between 8,000 and 10,000 (Arizona Department of Economic Planning and Development 1973; Willcox Public Schools 1973a).

But it would be incorrect to assume that the population of the trade area regularly markets in or otherwise uses the facilities of the town. The proximity of Tucson (about an hour and a half away on the interstate) draws much of the business of the Willcox area to that city. Safford, a community situated about 50 miles to the north of Willcox, is rapidly expanding, and the existence of discount stores as well as larger chain stores draws people to that community as well. The markets of Willcox are expanding and continue to serve the community. The importance of Tucson and Safford to the community is that they indicate that Willcox is well-situated in a communications network in the Southwest region. Daily and weekly papers from Tuscon are regularly received in Willcox. Phoenix and Los Angeles newspapers are also circulated in town. Four television channels can be received from Tucson with a normal antenna, and a cable television company which has been located in town since 1971 increases this number to eight.

The interstate highway also serves the recreation needs of the people. Although a movie theater is located in the town, it is seldom frequented by the adult population. Instead, having dinner and seeing a movie in the city of Tucson has become a common recreational practice. Other cultural events of that city, ranging from pop music concerts to opera, draw people of all ages out of Willcox and into Tucson many times a month.

The age and sex ratios of the population of the Willcox area reflect this increasing "pull" of Tucson and places beyond (see Figure 2-1). In this respect, Willcox is similar to many small towns: there is a noticeable lack of people between the ages of 18 and 30, as they leave the area after high school graduation in search of a different life.

Emigration from the area is not limited to young people. Community residents understand the delicate balance between their own livelihood and the economic strength of the community, and the necessity to leave the area when conditions are not favorable. As one businessman described it,

> Say if old Joe Rand down in the Kansas Settlement decides that he just can't make it any more by farming. Well, he moves to town and becomes a real-estate salesman. That means that there will be too many real-estate people in town, so someone will have to move to Tucson and sell real estate there. That will push someone else out of Tucson who will move to Phoenix. In the same way, that extra person in Phoenix will cause someone to move to Los Angeles.

Whether this description of population dynamics is correct in all details is not a concern of this study. What is important about this illustration is that a general westward and urban migration in the nation is discernible in Willcox as well. This migration in fact begins in the

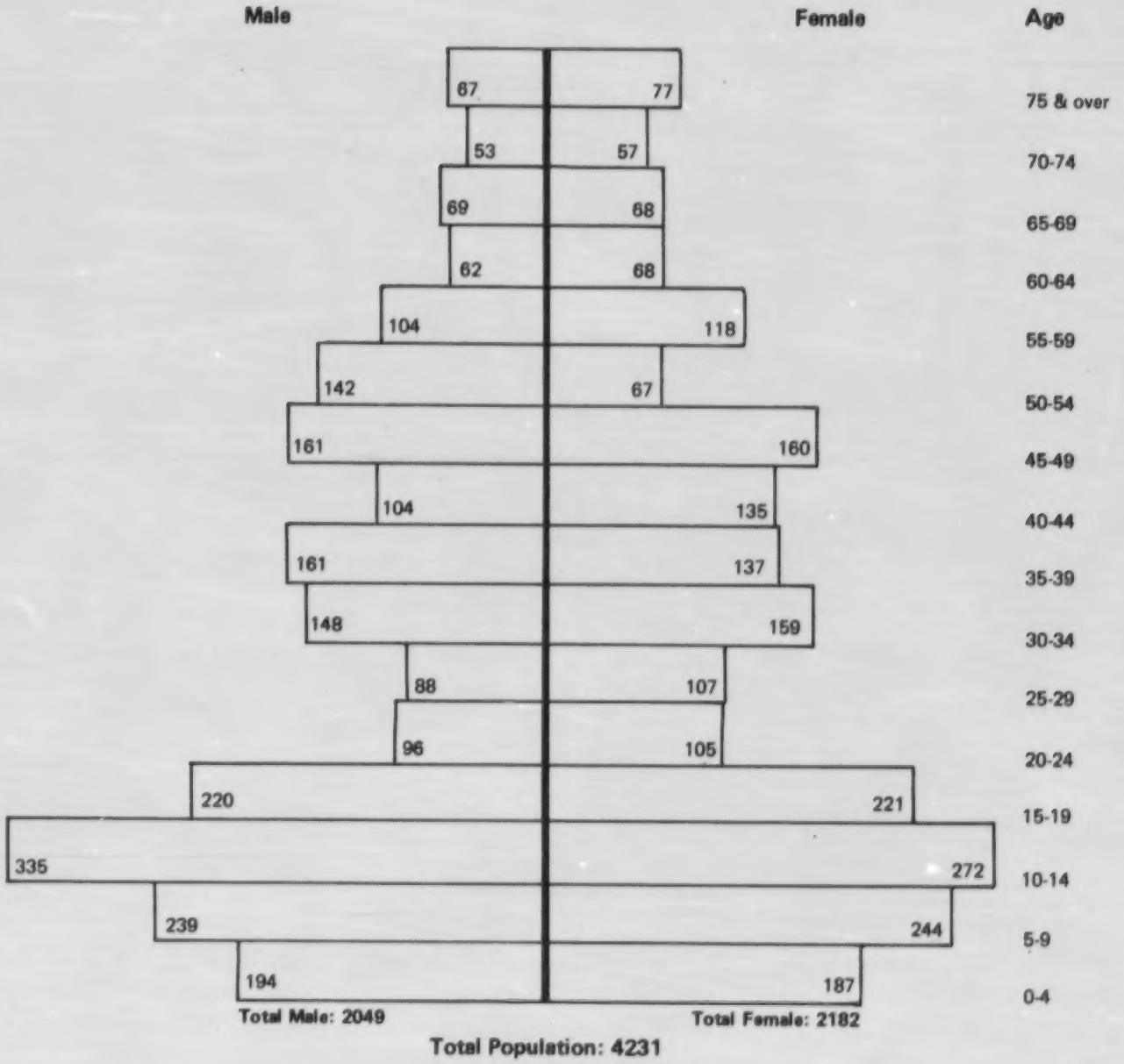

Figure 2-1. 1970 population by age and sex in Willcox school district (Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1973.)

Midwest, the original home of many of the new retirees, as well as of many of the younger teachers in the school system. The naming of Tucson, Phoenix and Los Angeles also indicates the reference points for the area, as does the arrival of newspapers from these three cities. In short, people look further west for news, markets, and what can be described as a general cultural orientation.

The emphasis in the preceding paragraphs on migration should not be interpreted as meaning that the community is dying out. As mentioned previously, the general trend in overall population figures is one of continued growth. The emigration is occurring in the age brackets of 18 to 30, but immigration is occurring in other age brackets. The notion that the general population of the community is getting older is distorted by the number of retirees who are entering the area; young people with families also continue to enter the community. A different trend may indeed be beginning in the community: very recent immigrants to Willcox and the area refer to the advantages of living in a medium-sized town as the reason why they chose to settle there. If the "return to the small town" ethic continues, the favorable geographic and economic position which Willcox enjoys could bring more people into its community.

Although the Mexican American people in the town constitute almost 30% of the population, and within the school district almost 20%, it has not been until very recently that they have begun to be an effective social and political force within the community. In the farming and ranching areas beyond the limits of the town itself, Mexican Americans have played important roles in the developing economy of the community. Migrant labor has been used in lettuce, beet, and cotton production,

although increasing mechanization has lessened the use of farm labor for the last two of these crops. Long-term farm and ranch labor has been provided by members of this population throughout the history of the area. Today Mexican Americans are represented in all levels of agricultural businesses.

Within the town, few Mexican Americans have traditionally been represented in business or civic organizations, although this is changing. A grocery market owned by a Mexican American more than tripled its floor area in the last three years, and Willcox elected a Mexican American to the city council in 1972. The school system has had few Mexican Americans in teaching or administrative positions, although many carry out maintenance, aide, and other operational functions of the school.

According to residents, after World War II, Mexican Americans began to understand their contributions to the community. They helped with the building of the veterans' club and brought about a change in consciousness within the Mexican community based on the importance of participating in the activities of the town. This is a trend which is continuing.

There is a danger in calling attention to and labeling one group as a homogeneous "community" within the community of Willcox. Mexican Americans in Willcox present a wide range of variation on any scale. For example, although many Anglos in Willcox lump all people of Mexican and Mexican American ancestry together as "mezkins" (a term of depreca-tion), Chicanos in Willcox differentiate between local, long-term Mexican American residents and those people who come from Mexico for agricultural work. Many of the Mexican American people of the Willcox

area were among the first settlers and businessmen of the town. Long-term residents and those whose families have been in Willcox for several generations refer to themselves as "Mejicanos locales" and to outsiders as "Mejicanos de la República." This major division had important ramifications in the development of a Chicano social and political organization. The Mexican American Non-Profit Organization (MANPO) is a locally created association which grew out of a recognition by several Mexican Americans that to be recognized in Willcox one had to be a member of a voluntary association. Organizations like the Junior Women's Club, Lions, Rotary, Homemakers and the many curch groups dominate the social and ceremonial life of Willcox.

MANPO was created in 1972 as a vehicle for bringing together Mexican American people for the common good. The club sponsors dances, helps transients, serves as a kind of "insurance" organization by helping members with hospital and funeral expenses, and joins with other organizations in sponsoring baseball teams, Rex Allen Days functions, and other community service activities. The membership of the organization is centered around several extended families of long-term residents of Willcox. One problem the organization has is in maintaining a viable membership. At times attendance at the bi-weekly meetings has dropped to four or five people. To remedy this situation, the president of the association periodically has asked members to bring friends and acquaintances to the meetings. At one meeting in 1974 a group of Mexican citizens who were working on some of the farms in the Kansas Settlement district came to the meeting and dominated much of the conversation. After the meeting was over, the president, José Garcia, said that he resented the presence of the outsiders. When he was asked why, he replied

Mexican heritage: high school students celebrating El Dia de la Raza.

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that first of all they made him feel uncomfortable and tongue-tied as they had a much better command of a Spanish oratorical style than he did. In addition, José thought that these Mejicanos de la república would attempt to gain control of the association and use it to their own advantage. José remarked that the labor organizations in Sonora (sindicatos) were very strong; these people wanted to turn this benevolent and social organization into an association based on a Mexican model.

This same distinction between Chicanos (Mexican Americans of the United States) and Mejicanos (people from Mexico) was expressed by the superintendent of schools during the first year of the Experimental Schools project. In May of 1974 the school system was attempting to provide a program for the children of migrant laborers which would allow for a free lunch program and an insurance program during the summer. In response to the federal guidelines for the program, the school set up a "parent advisory committee" to advertise and implement the program. After one meeting when many of the migrants found that they had been in the area for too long a time to be officially eligible for the program, the superintendent explained their confusion and disappointment to a principal as follows:

> These people are like that. They often feign ignorance when it's to their advantage. And when it is to their advantage, they will do it effectively. That's how they have gotten so much here.

At times local Mexican Americans have resented the association of themselves with people from Mexico: "Hell, I'm Chicano," the superintendent once said, "but you know what kind of food I like best? Not beans and tacos, but steak." The bilingual aides in the Experimental Schools project reported that many students claimed to be Indians rather than say that they were Mexicans.[1]

Barker (1972), in a study of the social functions of the Spanish language in Tucson in the late 1940s, found that the Mexican American community divided itself into upper and lower classes. This same distinction can be found in Willcox as well. When a person from an upper-class Mexican American family of Tucson was hired for the Experimental Schools project, many local people described him to me as "aloof" and "upper class" until they came to know him better. One member of MANPO asked if he was from India since he did not appear to be Anglo, but yet did not involve himself in the Mexican American community of Willcox for several months.

Complementing this diversity between local and non-local Mexican Americans, between Mexican Americans of different classes, and between Mexican Americans of different degrees of Spanish language proficiency, is a series of "boundary mechanisms" which allows for a definable Mexican American community. The Mexican American community in Willcox has historic roots: Mexican American people traditionally live in one section of town referred to as "the barrio" or "Mexican town" by residents.

At one time this separate community was bounded by a flood levee which distinguished the Anglo part of Willcox from the Mexican American part. Although the levee has been gone for several decades and Mexican Americans now live in all sections of the town, the barrio remains as an important economic and cultural center for the Mexican American community.

Most Mexican Americans have held lower-paying jobs in the community. For example, a survey carried out by the Willcox public schools found that half of the Mexican American men worked as unskilled laborers compared

to less than a fifth of other men in the community, and only four percent of Mexican Americans were in businesses or professions compared to thirty-two percent of other groups in the community. The only Mexican American to be elected to the city council was a janitor in the school system. Although some Mexican Americans in Willcox are considered to be "upper class," there are no families who have a tradition of wealth and social status comparable to that of Anglos, as is true in Tucson or many communities in New Mexico. Out of this common economic status, geographic boundary, and heritage of a single language, Mexican American people in Willcox consciously think of themselves as being a "community." The following exchange which took place after a MANPO meeting illustrates the growing politicization of Mexican Americans in Willcox:

Jesse: "You know, on TV you see all kinds of blacks, but you never see any Mexicans."
Ray: "Oh, they're there, but they don't use their Mexican names; they take on Anglo names."
Rosa: "Like that Freddy Printz; what is he anyway? He's not even Mexican. He's Hungarian or something."
Betty: "And Anthony Quinn is Greek, isn't he?"
Anthr.: "No, he's Mexican."
Betty: "But his father is Irish. How could he have a name like Quinn if he's Mexican."
Ray: "That attitude really irks me. Look at the blacks. They're proud, not timid like us. The problem with us is we're too timid. We shouldn't be ashamed of our heritage, we should be proud of it."

Ethnicity is the strongest basis for social division in Willcox. The community does not have a strict class system, as mobility and the ability to creatively succeed in any business is highly valued. In addition to ethnicity, people in Willcox are divided by sex, occupation, and age. Formal organizations such as Junior Women's, Homemakers, and Senior Women's clubs each have their counterpart in male organizations such as

the Lions, Kiwanis, and Rotary clubs. Women take a minority role in such activities as local government. For example, one retiring school board member remarked that she hoped that the board would appoint another woman in her place so that there would be someone to "make the coffee and keep the language clean during board meetings." Occupation is another important organizing principle in Willcox. Although farmers, ranchers, business people and school people know and associate with each other regularly, each group tends to see the other as a monolithic subsection of Willcox society. For example, at a Christmas party a banker remarked that the "educators" were all in one room. When someone questioned my own presence in the room with the business people, he said, "Well, Al isn't an educator, he's an anthropologist."

Business people hold a daily meeting of an informal "coffee club" at ten in the morning where much local business, gossip, and news is discussed. This organization serves not only to provide an informal atmosphere for business plans and transactions, but also separates the business people from the other subgroups in the town. Although a few administrators from the school system frequent the coffee breaks, most school employees cannot leave their classes or offices for this daily ritual. Instead, teachers often go out for coffee or soft drinks after 4:30 in the afternoon or go to a local tavern on Friday afternoons when the school week is over. Farmers and ranchers have their own version of the "coffee club." Instead of meeting at an in-town cafe, they meet at a truckstop at eight o'clock in the morning every day.

Differences in age are also an important construct in the Willcox social world. The major age split is between school-aged people and adults. School-aged people have their own recreational activities that

differ remarkably from those of adults. Self-estimates of drug and alcohol use among teenagers have run up to 95%, and arrests for marijuana and liquor consumption are common. The fact that the community is on an interstate highway and close to an isolated part of the U.S.-Mexican border makes Willcox a major thoroughfare through which many drugs pass. One high school student remarked that the Rex Allen Days Weekend which brings many outside tourists into Willcox also brings in major drug supplies to local youths. In contrast, marijuana use is all but unknown to adults in the community. Those who have been exposed to the drug in college or in the military tend to discount reports of its widespread use among teenagers.

Many of the adult voluntary associations are also age graded. For women, the Junior Women's club and the Women's Club represent women up to about age 35 and over age 35, respectively. In men's organizations, the Lions club tends to include younger businessmen, farmers and ranchers while the Rotary club is known as the organization for more established, older businessmen, farmers, and ranchers.

Willcox is not, then, a town marked by overwhelming social cleavages. What divisions occur tend to be situationally important and do not result in a solidification of a social class system. Although wealth and a high-status occupation are certainly looked upon with favor, residents view each other's fortunes and status as an attained feature of their lives. This is in part due to the rise and fall of the different economic activities outlined in the previous chapter. Farming is especially prone to boom or bust periods and people comment regularly about well-to-do farmers who have lost heavily in the past. Willcox prides itself on an ethic of equality and self-reliance. Residents are genuinely pleased when someone shows evidence of having made a success out of an occupation in the

community. What is interesting is that, once people have shown themselves to be successful, that quality continues to be attributed to them even in hard times. When a local bank closed in 1974 because of the loss of several million dollars, the ex-president was given a job in a local farm machinery store as a parts manager. Even though the president of the now-defunct bank was under suspicion by federal bank officials, he retained his friendships and status among other businessmen in town. Although he resigned from his office in the Rotary club and lowered his level of interaction with other residents, he was not considered any less of a respected community member by other residents.

In short, status in Willcox is not as important as having attempted to wrest a living from the difficult environment of a small town in the high desert. Willcox is committed to growth and improvement more than to social class differentiation. To this end, the local governmental structure is important in the initiation of many civic improvements. At one point, the city sponsored a camera club and provided space for meetings and a darkroom. Although the club never really got off the ground and was disbanded after one year of operation, the city manager expressed his philosophy about ventures of that nature when he said, "the real purpose of a city government in a small town like this is to help people do things that they couldn't do by themselves." In other words, city government is seen as an extension of individual initiative.

LOCAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE WILLCOX COMMUNITY

In social science literature, several attempts have been made at categorizing different community types. Redfield's work in the Yucatan in the 1930s led to the idea that communities can be placed along a folk-to-urban continuum (Redfield 1941, 1960) with homogeneous "little communities"

at one end and complex urban communities at the other. Eric Wolf (1956) has discussed peasant communities as either "open" and receptive to new economic and social orders or "closed" and conservative. Arensberg and Kimball (1965) have provided historical sketches of different kinds of American communities such as the New England town, the Southern County, the crossroads village, as well as urban and suburban communities. All of these efforts at typologizing communities have suffered from a view of community as a static phenomenon, something that exists beyond the consciousness of local participants. In contrast, the seminal works of Gearing (1958, 1962) are especially important because they illustrate the implications of the common-sense observation that communities may have different dynamic social structures during different parts of the year. Gearing used the phrase "structural pose" (1958:1148) to show how Cherokee villages changed from season to season and activity to activity throughout the year:

> The notion of structural pose, which is offered here, draws attention to the well-established fact that the social structure of a human community is not a single set of roles and organized groups, but is rather a series of several sets of roles and groups which appear and disappear according to the tasks at hand.

Gearing's analysis of 18th century Cherokee village communities leaves open the question of whether participants recognize these various structures. Some of the recent work by cognitive anthropologists (Tyler 1969, Spradley 1972) has suggested that local perceptions of the nature of social structure are important ways of understanding how communities operate. From this semantic standpoint, one can examine some of the ways people in Willcox viewed themselves as a "community," and in this way build on Gearing's work on structural diversity within a community.

The distribution of the term "community," its meanings, and the modes of social reality which the term encompasses are highly important in understanding the way people order their lives within their locale. It is one of the "organizing principles" of the culture of Willcox.

The widest use of the concept of the Willcox community is found in residents' dealings with people from outside of the geographic area of the Northern Sulphur Springs Valley. Within this geologic basin, some 8,000 people reside. The idea of the Willcox community exists for all of them as a boundary mechanism, separating them from the rest of the world. Willcox is a place name, a post office address, a telephone exchange, a railroad stop, and a highway interchange. The common factor in all of the above systems is the labeling of a geographic place separate from any others. The importance of the concept of 'community' to all of the residents of the northern portion of the Valley is that it normalizes or organizes interactions they have with people from other places by naming them as members of a recognized social system. From these examples, it can be seen that the overall Willcox community exists in contrast to people and other community systems of the southwest region, Mexico, and the rest of the United States. In other words, this conception of the Willcox community only exists because of the existence of other systems of social organization in geographic space. It defines "us" apart from "them." The concept then exists as an organizing feature of communication, and is used in situations where people from different places encounter one another. The notion of "boundary" implicit in this idea of community in Willcox will become more important as the other meanings of the term are explored.

THE COMMUNITIES OF WILLCOX

Daily life in Willcox provides ample evidence of the existence of not one but many communities contained in the northern Sulphur Springs Valley. The same question, "where do you live?" asked of a resident can elicit different answers, depending on the position of the person asking the question. For example, one answer would be "Willcox." This answer would be given to a person who was obviously not from the area. On the other hand, if the questioner were a resident of the Valley, the answer might just as well be "Fort Grant Road." Or, under slightly different conditions, the same question could receive the answer "Stewart District." In all three cases, the location of the respondent's home might be the same. What changes in each case is the conception of 'community' used by the two participants in the exchange.

Under other circumstances, the conception of community in Willcox can be more sharply limited. For example, a common phrase spoken by school administrators is that the school system needs "more community involvement." Similarly, "community members" are regularly asked to serve on school committees. Under these circumstances, the concept of community divides the school system from the rest of the society. The community is understood as existing <u>outside of</u> the institution of education.

From these few examples, it can be seen that the conception of 'community' may not be the same among all residents of the basin, nor is it the same under all conditions. The importance of this is that all of the various meanings of the term exist simultaneously. By unraveling these meanings, a more precise understanding of community life and

dynamics as they influence the educational system can be elaborated. If something is said to "benefit the community," it is important to sort out which community is being benefited.

There is a difficulty in applying this epistemological approach to the concept of community in Willcox. Willcox, after all, is a manifestation of North American, and especially U.S., culture. Because of this, there is an overlap between the local ideas and uses of the term 'community' and those held by social scientists. This is because the sociological use of the term has grown out of a more general usage, one which has the same origin as the term in Willcox. In the discussion of the term in this section, it is necessary to keep the two conceptions of 'community' separate. When 'community' is discussed here, its meaning depends on the constellation of attributes which have been discovered to be relevant in Willcox and analyzed in terms of social usage.[2]

The Territorial Community

In the widest conception of community in Willcox described in the first few pages of this section, the idea of Willcox as a place, a distinct geographic area of the Sulphur Springs Valley, was mentioned as a salient characteristic of the term. The range of telephone services, post office addresses, and market networks takes in a wide area, including the small towns of Cochise, Dos Cabezas, Bonita and Klondike. The population of this area is estimated at between eight and twelve thousand. The population of the school district, a smaller portion of this large area, was listed at 4,450 in the 1970 census.

The dispersion of people throughout this area has resulted in a demographic view of the 'community' as rural. One resident described it as follows:

> [Willcox is] a rural community. The farms really support the community, as well as tourism. I guess I consider it rural because our school system takes in so much area around the city. For instance, they bring in kids from the Chiricahuas, and that's quite a ways out.

The importance of a land-based economy as the energy behind this idea of community was expressed by another resident:

> What you have to understand is that Willcox is primarily a farming and ranching community. The real backbone of the community is in these industries.

The most general conception of community described here for residents will be referred to as the territorial community. The following characteristics stand out as most salient:

- -It is made up of the total population of the Northern Sulphur Springs Valley.
- -It is perceived as a geographic place with a specific boundary.
- -It includes a large geographic area with a dispersed population, and is thus referred to as "rural."
- -Use of the natural resources through farming and ranching is understood as the unifying force binding the population together.
- -It contains a number of population clusters within it.

This last point is important. The territorial community is made up of five towns: the City of Willcox, Dos Cabezas, Klondike, Bonita, and Cochise, as well as two major farming and ranching areas, the Kansas Settlement and Stewart District. The consolidation of services in the City of Willcox, including telephone, banking, mail and education has been the major historical factor in the creation of the territorial community. Prior to school consolidations in the twenties and forties, interstate highway construction in the sixties, and telephone centralization in the fifties, the idea of the "Willcox community" (territorial community) did

not have meaning. Instead, the several population clusters were understood as communities in themselves. Presently, the conscious decision of the administration of the Fort Grant Training Center, a state prison located at the northern edge of the territorial community, to change their supply and service center from Safford to Willcox is further enlarging the effective boundary of the territorial community. There is evidence in the education system to predict further enlargement due to future school district consolidation. A state law passed in 1974 requiring special education programs in all schools caused a number of school districts around Willcox to look to the Willcox schools as a possible center for the implementation of these programs. The superintendent of the Willcox Public Schools interpreted this as a first step in the possible future consolidation of nearby districts.

The territorial community, then, is a creation of forces beyond the local activities of the residents. Services, regional and national systems of education, communication, and transportation have historically played a major part in enlarging the boundaries of the territorial community and continue to do so today. The territorial community is referred to as the "Willcox community" because that town is the entrance point and distribution center for these services and systems.

In addition to those already discussed, it is important to note some of the smaller services of a non-local nature which have become centered in the City of Willcox. The U.S. Forest Service had a ranger station in the town, and the Farmers Home Administration, Soil Conservation Service, Federal Aviation Administration, Cooperative Extension Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committee, and the Immigration Border

Patrol all have offices in Willcox. Also, the University of Arizona has a Community Development Program office in the city. All of these smaller services have a cumulative effect in expanding the area of the territorial community while centralizing activity in the City of Willcox. In this same regard, the seventeen churches of the city serve the territorial community, as well as the nearby towns of Bowie, Benson, Sunsites, and Pearce.

The limits of the territorial community are geographic. Future growth will not expand the community indefinitely, as other communities of similar dimensions surround Willcox. These include Benson to the west, Safford to the north, San Simon to the east, and Douglas/Agua Prieta to the south. Also, the city of Tucson, eighty-five miles west of Willcox, limits the growth of the territorial community because of the availability of services and facilities there. The limited yet steady growth of the territorial community is understood as a positive value by residents:

Anthropologist: Why do you like to live here?

Resident: Well, it's a good sized community. It's small enough and easy enough to get around in, and seems to be growing at a steady rate. I wouldn't want it to grow as fast as Las Cruces did. If it did, I think I'd leave. It's just the right size now. it has a couple of good grocery stores and so on. I wouldn't mind though, if it grew a little bit more so it could support a couple of other businesses.

Anthropologist: Do you think Willcox will grow in the future?

Resident: Yes, I really do. I think that many people are concerned about raising their children in a large city. In fact, I've met many people who have moved to Willcox because they wanted to raise their kids in a small town, in a small area. . . . So I really feel that Willcox is going to grow. I hope that we remain small, but I can see an increase in population.

The conception of the Willcox community as the territorial community is used in interactions with people from without, as was mentioned at the beginning of this section. It is a boundary created out of the necessity of dealing with larger regional and national networks. It is symbolized in the zip code of the community and in the telephone exchange. However, some other communities of Willcox exist within this larger conception.

The Civic Community

A second important conceptualization of the idea of community in Willcox is the notion of an idealized union of adult residents who can efficiently carry out a planned task.[3] The civic community is a network of communication found at the institutional level of Willcox society. The institutional level of Willcox society corresponds to the formal groups and organizations in the community: businesses, churches, voluntary organizations and some corporate organizations. The civic community is a mental image of Willcox society that people refer to when social action is planned and carried out. In late 1974, for example, a new movie theater was being planned for the town. The old theater was considered dirty and potentially dangerous (it later was damaged by fire), and some local businessmen saw the possibility of a successful modern theater which would both serve recreational needs and be profitable. Before a corporation was created to sell stock, several of the key businessmen in the venture met down at a cafe on the main street of town for an afternoon coffee break. Their conversation reflected ideas about the civic community:

A: You see boys, we have to get the community involved in something like this. If they're not behind it, it doesn't have a chance. Now who do you think we should contact in order to get things moving?

B: Yeah, but in that release you made up (a news release to a local paper) you said that the community will cooperate. That's a little strong. I think you should have toned that down; we have to ease into this thing.

C: So let's get some other people to help us get the support. Why not contact some of the people from the churches and other organizations in town?

A: Do you think the city should be involved in this?

B: Well, we don't want it to look like they're doing it, but if we had our good mayor say something about it, it would certainly help.

A: Of course there's an important thing I forgot to put in here: this is a community project. We're not looking for revenue sharing or other federal aid. A lot of people around here would shy away if they thought this was a federal project.

B: O.K., get in touch with Wilber [the mayor]. Also see David; he's important in the Mormon Church. How about the Mexicans? Should we get in touch with José Garcia or Robert Mendez?

D: You better see José; he's not as nervous about being quoted about something like this as Robert is.

A: Who else do we need to get in touch with?

B: Well, we need to contact the various clubs through their presidents or representatives, but I think we can do that ourselves because I think we have them pretty well represented right here at this table.

A: Yeah, us Methodists are in everything! (laughter)

In the above example, the cooperation of all segments of the civic community was the goal. Multiple memberships in voluntary associations, churches, and occupational groups or businesses served as the primary means of achieving this cooperation. Secondary networks within each organization,

such as meetings or "telephone trees," would serve as the next level. Informal friendship patterns between organizational members and other residents serve as the third level of cooperation. The structure would be supported through formal testimonials in the local newspaper by the "key personnel" noted in the conversation, as well as by testimonials by the group designing the task.

A significant feature of the civic community is the process of excluding the initiating group from the conception of community. That is, in each case, a boundary is arbitrarily drawn between the group of people seeking to introduce a change in the larger community and the residents who will ultimately be affected by the change. By consciously creating the civic community and attempting to have it carry out a task, new ideas, organizations, and events are introduced into Willcox. For example, "community involvement" in church functions, in local government projects, in business endeavors, and in school system tasks is a common concern expressed when any of these groups undertake a new form of social action. It does not matter, for example, that the school system has "community involvement" through the employment of approximately 150 adults of the area, or that the parents of 1,500 students in the schools are involved by having their children participate in the school system six hours a day. When the formal institution of the school system institutes a new program, the civic community is the conception under which they operate. Thus, a division between the school system and the community is arbitrarily drawn so that it can be broken down by incorporating, for a given length of time, people from other formal organizations, themselves not employed by the schools and thus not formal members of that system.

The following example of the civic community illustrates its implementation:

> In the spring of 1974, high winds heralding the coming of the summer season resulted in the overturning of many garbage cans with the resultant dispersion of paper and other refuse throughout the alleys of the City of Willcox. After a number of complaints were lodged with the city government, the city council called for a campaign to clean up the town. The city noted that they would "do their part," but that the solution to the problem rested with "community support." Through the local newspaper, the city council called upon the citizenry to build better garbage can holders, tie down the lids, and to clean up the neighborhoods. The campaign was brought to a focus by the announcement of a "community cleanup day" at the "community coordinating council." On a Friday, the community was divided into three parts: the school system, the city government, and 'the community.' Each group cleaned up its portion of the town. Through the efforts of these groups, and due to the abatement of the spring winds, the town was cleaned up. (Field notes, April 1974)

The civic community operates across institutional groups in Willcox. Communicating the need for the civic community (cooperation for the common good) is carried out through formal and informal structures of institutional life in the area. Each voluntary organization (some thirty-five exist in the area) has a hierarchical organization of members. Most often, this system is a division into "officers" and "members," the officers consisting of a president, a vice-president, a secretary, and so on. Meetings, the time when much information about the civic community is brought forth, are run by the presidents. Once a month a group of representatives of each organization meet as the "community coordinating council" of Willcox. Ideally, this council is made up of the presidents of the organizations, but more often it is made up of other members. At these meetings, new programs, tasks, and influences on the population of the area are discussed. If the organization of residents symbolized by the civic community is needed to carry out a task, then these representatives pass the information on to the associations.

The task or program of the civic community is always external to the area. In order to bring in any outside item or task, each group momentarily places itself outside of the formal organization of the civic community and calls for the institutions of the area to enter into a cooperative effort to incorporate a new community feature.

In the school system, this phenomenon is often seen when pressures demand the incorporation of people not employed by the schools into the organization of the system. The creation of "citizen committees" is perhaps the most common task which calls for the involvement of the civic community. In many cases, the task of the committee member is to attend a meeting. A common complaint of people not involved with the schools (as employees) is that the committees "don't seem to do anything."

Anthropologist: Has the Steering Committee of the project met this year?

Resident: No, we really weren't doing anything, just having meeting after meeting, so we decided to drop out. But I don't think they have met anyway. I think our purpose was served last year, so the school decided not to have us meet this year. The project was approved, so we didn't have to meet any more.

From the school's standpoint, the task referred to above was one which only required the civic community in the initial stages. Then the school's normal organizational pattern could take over:

Anthropologist: What about the community's role in the project?

School Superintendent: I think that as the project develops, it will increase. The community's role up to this point has been . . . during the planning phase it's always fun to plan and all of this kind of stuff, you know. The attitude that was taken was that there were unlimited funds; "no matter how wild the idea, let's try it." . . . That was the attitude. That's fun. But then when it comes time to do it, nobody wants to work. Everybody wants to plan and talk.

But once you start working, that's a different thing. So, community participation and interest was high during that period: the beginning of the planning, the middle of the planning. And then it dwindled because the final part of it demanded work. And then, it won't be as much now as it was in the beginning.

The civic community can be summarized by noting the following characteristics:

1) It is an arrangement of residents at the institutional level.

2) It is task oriented.

3) It uses formal and informal networks of communication to solidify the structure.

4) Initiators of tasks (or their organizations) are not themselves considered members of the civic community.

Ambiguity between the civic community and other conceptions of community such as the territorial community is common. For example, if, in an institutional setting, a task has not been drawn up, but there is a potential for one, differing conceptions of community can arise:

Anthropologist: How about the community? What do you think they know about the project?

Resident: I think they're quite uninformed. I say this because if our teachers are uninformed, and our teachers are leaders in the community, then the community must be uninformed. I haven't had time to get out in the community, to join clubs or anything like that.

Anthropologist: How about the community?

Resident: Back to the same old thing: communication. It's going to take a lot of footwork, a lot of personal contacts. If we can get the people from the community involved in the schools then they are going to do their own footwork.

The civic community of Willcox was not without failure or conflict. The theater project had to be disbanded when it became apparent that residents of Willcox were not in a position to buy enough stocks

in the theater corporation to make the venture feasible. Conflict over what new ideas or activities should be brought in to the community is also common when people are operating under the civic community. The following field journal excerpt illustrates one of these conflicts as it erupted at the morning coffee meeting of the town businessmen:

> Today, after the game had been played to see who would pay for the coffee, Ernie Kane said that a group of high school students had given a presentation at the Rotary meeting last night which dealt with traffic safety. He said that they had given a good presentation and he thought the coffee club ought to make a $30 donation from the kitty to give to these students as a gesture of our support. Ernie completed his plea with a polite disclaimer, "that is, unless someone has an objection to this." Ed Concord quickly spoke up: "Yes. I have an objection. I don't think that traffic safety should be supported like that. I don't think someone should be patted on the head for driving safely. It should be a natural thing." There was a sudden stop of all conversation as people listened to Ed's remarks. Ernie was embarrased and taken back: "Well, O.K., I'm sorry I brought it up if you don't want to do it." "No," said Ed, "You asked if anybody had any objections, and I just said I have one. If everybody else votes to do it, fine. I'm probably the only one objecting." Ernie then tried to persuade the fifteen people sitting around the long table by discussing the purpose of the coffee club: "What's this club for anyway? Don't we support the Red and White Club (the high school booster club)? This is the same thing. We're just showing that we support the school." Ed came back with a comment about the Rural Schools project: "What's the function of Rural Schools?" Ed evidently thought that this traffic safety club was one of the many things that the federal project had brought in. Ernie corrected him: "But this isn't part of that Rural Schools project. This is a club." "That's just the point," said Ed, "this should be incorporated into the schools; it shouldn't be a club that goes around asking for money." Ed left and the matter was dropped. The club never gave any money to the high school students. Ed didn't come back to the coffee klatsch for several weeks. Ernie held a grudge against Ed for several months.

The Ethnic Community

As pointed out earlier, Mexican Americans in Willcox conceive of themselves as constituting a separate community. At times this is by choice and at times it is a condition which is externally imposed. One of the reasons why MANPO (Mexican American Non-Profit Organization) was formed was to provide a positive image of the ethnic community. This was pointed out by one of the presidents of that organization, Robert Mendez, as he talked with some members of the organization after factionalism had led to some discontent in a meeting:

> We in the Chicano community have to put up a united front. If the Anglos see us fighting among ourselves like we do much of the time, then they'll think, "oh the heck with them, they don't mean anything." But if we're there, all together, then we'll succeed in becoming a part of this community. We won't be ignored anymore like we have been.

The existence of the ethnic community was profitably exploited by the writers of the plan for the federally-funded Experimental Schools project. In the section of the plan dealing with the people of Willcox, the writers devoted eleven of the fourteen paragraphs to a discussion of the Mexican American people of Willcox. The Tucson newspaper wrote a story about the survey that the project did on the community and likewise highlighted the Mexican American community. Willcox residents were incensed at the story, headlined "Study Examines Ethnic Mix" (Arizona Daily Star, March 26, 1972), because of the view the story gave of Willcox as a depressed Mexican American community. The newspaper quoted the Rural Schools project survey as finding that:

> -In over one third of the marriages involving Mexican Americans, one or both of the adults are not U.S. citizens.

-Mexican American families have more children than other groups by 3 to 2.

-Almost half of the Mexican American males work as unskilled laborers compared to 14 percent of the other groups.

-Only four percent of the Mexican Americans are in business or professions, while 32 percent of the others are.

-Mexican American women who work are mostly laborers. Only eight percent are in business, office or professional jobs. Twenty-six percent of the other women hold these jobs.

-Forty percent of the Mexican American men have not completed the eighth grade compared to six percent of the other men.

-Almost four times as many other adults have finished high school and/or college as Mexican American adults.

-During the current high school year, only one out of 18 dropouts was Mexican American.

-Forty-two percent of the Mexican American families live on less than $5,000 a year. Seventeen percent of the other group is in this category.

(Arizona Daily Star, March 26, 1972)

A year and a half after it was printed, residents were still discussing the story. Most Anglos thought that the story was sensational and gave a biased picture of Willcox. As the city manager stated, "Why, this isn't even a Mexican American town. It's not like those places in New Mexico or California. We don't even have any examples of Mexican or Spanish architecture here." The ethnic community was used as bait to draw in federal funds for the Willcox schools, but local town leaders considered it unfair when a city newspaper used the same conception of Willcox in a story.

The identification of an ethnic community in Willcox is based on a recognition that Mexican Americans have a history, language, and outlook

different from those of the Anglo residents of the town. Its existence depends as much on the majority Anglo population as it does on the 25 to 35 percent of the population that identifies itself as Mexican American. In other words, the ethnic community exists in relation to the non-Mexican Americans in Willcox and is defined in contrast to the ways of life of Anglo residents of the town. The ethnic community can be summarized as follows:

1. The ethnic community has been a part of Willcox since the inception of the town.

2. Ethnic affiliation is not important in all social spheres, but instead its significance tends to vary with different situations.

3. The ethnic community is itself heterogeneous due to a constant migration from Mexico into the community.

4. The low economic level of many Mexican Americans in Willcox has led to a sense of embarrassment on the part of civic and ethnic community leaders when such information is published as being characteristic of "the Willcox community."

The Ideal Community

Another way people in Willcox use the idea of community is to refer to the existence of services, facilities and people that make up the "good life" of living in Willcox.

> Resident: You know, Willcox is a really great community. When I came here from Idaho, I was surprised to see the swimming pool, the new school system, and the visitors' center on the highway. I haven't seen a school system that was this good in towns five times as large as Willcox. And the people here really take you in. They are really open and friendly, you know what I mean?

The ideal community is almost an idealized version of Willcox. But the services, facilities, and friendly people do indeed exist. The

ideal community places these attributes of the area in the spotlight in people's minds and ignores negative features such as the falling water tables, isolation, and depletion of soil resources that exist in the Valley. The ideal community is more like the kind of image Willcox attempts to portray to the outside world than is the ethnic community. In the spring of 1976 the Phoenix Arizona Republic sent a reporter to Willcox to write a story about a typical Arizona small town. The article was later printed in the Sunday magazine supplement to the paper (Arizona Republic, August 1, 1976) under the headline, "Life in a Small Town: It Is a Place Where Everyone Takes Care of Everyone Else and Where They Complain of a Lack of Privacy and of Things to Do." The ambiguity of the title was reflected in the story. Willcox was portrayed as a friendly but unexciting place. Soon after the story came out, the president of the Chamber of Commerce wrote a letter to the Arizona Republic and the local Arizona Range News complaining that the reporter had talked to malcontents and had not found out what the real community was like. It must be emphasized that residents who are in successful businesses or who have adequate jobs do conceive of Willcox as outlined here under the phrase, "the ideal community." The ideal community is not a facade so much as it is an idea of the community which people have developed and live with. It is no less "real" than any of the other conceptions described in this section.

The relevant features of the ideal community of Willcox can be summarized as:

1) A small population

2) Pleasant neighborhoods

3) Community pride and spirit

4) Stable economy based on agriculture

5) Environmental beauty

6) Excellent social and civic services

7) Friendly people

The ideal community was described fully in a book by Schultz, Southwestern Town: The Story of Willcox, Arizona (1964) and more recently in two booklets put out by the local newspaper, Willcox, 60th Anniversary Edition (Arizona Range News 1975) and Willcox: The First 100 Years (Arizona Range News 1976).

DISCUSSION

There are other configurations of community that could be described for Willcox. For example, a major community form exists among residents who are under eighteen years old. Young people have their own sense of geography of the area which includes neighborhoods, places to go, places used for parties, and so forth. Young people seldom know the members of the Willcox city council or school board, but they know most of the police force. The boundaries of their community extend down the interstate highway to Tucson. I did not investigate the conception that farmers and ranchers had about the community, but impressionistic information indicates that they, too, have a unique view of the Willcox community. Many of the farmers in the northern part of the Valley came from the farming areas of west Texas in the early 1960s and still maintain closer ties among themselves than they do with other residents.

Unlike Gearing's (1958) cyclical view of social structure or structural poses, the view of the Willcox community that I have described here is

more situational and group focused. The Willcox social structure consists of the arrangement of voluntary associations, businesses, and agricultural employment that become visible during the annual Rex Allen Days festival. During the three to four days of that weekend, Willcox residents put aside any differences that they have with one another to present to the tourist world a view of the community as a well-articulated collection of clubs, businesses, churches, and governmental functions. This consellation of elements of the Willcox community (the civic community) is personified through the Rex Allen Days parade when each of the clubs and organizations builds a float which demonstrates each club's link with the western heritage of the community. During the rest of the year, social life is ordered through small cliques of friendship networks, usually based on occupational and formal organizational lines, tempered by a loose age-grade system.

Thus, all levels of the Willcox community are characterized by diversity: various external influences are readily received and integrated into the local culture; the City of Willcox (and its environs) embraces a multiplicity of ethnic, occupational, institutional and age groups, as well as a variety of geographical, economic, and cultural characteristics; and the individual citizen is himself a complex network of "memberships" in the various overlapping communities that make up Willcox.

CHAPTER THREE. THE WILLCOX SCHOOLS PLAN FOR COMPREHENSIVE CHANGE

The Experimental Schools program was brought into the Willcox community in 1972. Not surprisingly, the community was not hostile to the idea of federal aid for education, and the project found considerable support within those groups or elements represented by the civic community and the ideal community. Unfortunately, these two structures of the community did not have the committed support of all residents; even in 1972, some residents who lived outside the town of Willcox had become disillusioned with federal programs of any kind.

This chapter begins with a description of the characteristics of the Willcox schools, which provides the context for understanding the planning and implementation of its Experimental Schools project once it was adopted into the system. The second part of this chapter describes the conception and initiation of the project. Here, the letter of interest, the awarding of a planning grant and the writing of a first plan for the project will be examined. The significance of the planning process in Willcox was that, although local educators involved in the project perceived Washington officials as colleagues who were eager to have a locally designed program, Washington officials were, in fact, already exercising considerable control over the design of the Willcox project.

THE SCHOOLS OF WILLCOX

Willcox School District No. 13 covers an area of approximately 950 square miles. This area follows the general outlines of the Willcox Basin (see Fig. 1-1, p. 21), although the exact boundaries reflect political

rather than strictly geographic considerations. Within this large area live over 1,450 students, approximately one-half within the city of Willcox and one-half outside the city. (By comparison, the average enrollment of school districts in Arizona in 1971-72 was 1,531.) The school district itself is governed by a five-person Board of Trustees which meets monthly to decide issues pertaining to the operation of the educational system. During the 1971-72 school year the district had a superintendent, three building principals, and 71 teachers who carried out the instructional program with the students. Two counselors, nine instructional and seven clerical aides assisted in the schools, and the maintenance and operation of school buildings and buses were carried out by 27 janitors and drivers.

The organization of the instructional program is comprised of an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school. All schools are graded: the elementary school contains grades kindergarten through four; the middle school, grades five through eight; and the high school, grades nine through twelve. The middle and high schools are located on the same grounds and share cafeteria, auditorium, and library (media center) resources. The elementary school is located about a half-mile away. The number of students in each school is roughly equal: 541 in the elementary, 497 in the middle school, and 425 in the high school. The student population has the same general ethnic composition as the community at large: approximately 70% are Anglo, 26% Mexican American, and the remaining 4% black or of other ethnic backgrounds.

The Willcox school system serves as an extension center for both the Cochise County College, a two-year college in Douglas, Arizona (80 miles from Willcox), which was opened in 1964, and the state system, including

the University of Arizona and Northern Arizona University. These institutions also draw upon the Willcox system for students. Although the University of Arizona at Tucson has traditionally received the greatest number of Willcox students going on to college, Cochise College is becoming increasingly favored in this regard. Many people feel that it is easier to go on to a large university, such as the University of Arizona, after first attending two years at Cochise College. During the 1970s while Willcox had its Experimental Schools project, a local resident served on the Cochise College board of trustees. Cochise College became increasingly important for Chicano students during this time as more students began attending college. The MANPO organization discussed in Chapter Two provided two scholarships a year for students who went to Cochise College or other schools for post-high school education.

Beyond the local level, the Willcox Public School system is under the authority of the county superintendent of schools, and ultimately responsible to the county Board of Supervisors. The hierarchy of authority beyond the county level includes the Arizona State Board of Education, responsible for reviewing state and federal programs for each district as well as suggesting textbooks, and the state government, consisting of a governor and legislature. The local boards of education have striven to keep their autonomy in local issues, although state guidelines for instruction and budgetary expenditures are followed.

The most striking aspect of the Willcox Public Schools is their newness. Since the first grammar school was built in 1885, expansions, remodeling, and new buildings have characterized the town. The first high school was built in 1911, but by 1922 it had to be extensively remodeled to handle the increasing enrollment (Black, 1940:49). In 1930

Modern buildings of the Willcox school system.

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extensive remodeling again took place, and agriculture and home economics were added to the curriculum (Schultz 1964:102). Building programs continued through the 1930s and 1940s, and in 1955 a new elementary and high school were completed. In 1960 a junior high school was built, and further expansion of the high school took place in 1966, 1969, and 1971. Thus, all of the buildings in use at the three schools in the mid-1970s had been built since 1955. Aside from classroom space, each school has additional space for activities. These include gyms at both the high and middle schools, cafeterias at the elementary and high schools (the middle school shares the cafeteria with the high school), a "media center" housing library and audiovisual facilities, and laboratory and shop space for science and industrial arts programs. The two libraries located at the elementary and high schools contain 5,524 volumes. Audiovisual materials for the school system are many and of high quality. They include movie projectors, television cameras and video taping equipment, tape cassette players, and numerous slide and overhead projectors.

The grounds of the schools are likewise notable. A large, lighted football stadium on the high school grounds serves the schools; the sports program uses baseball diamonds, tennis courts, and the recently completed city swimming pool. The school golf team uses the two golf courses of Arizona Bell and Twin Lakes located in Willcox as well.

Like many school districts in non-urban settings, the Willcox School District has undergone much redistricting in its history, most of it during the 1920s and 1930s. The student population has grown steadily under this impetus, as schools at Dos Cabezas, Stewart, McAllister, and the Kansas Settlement have been closed and their students sent in by bus to the Willcox Schools. Because of the large area covered by the district

(about 950 square miles), over half of the student population is bused each day to and from school. The longest bus runs can last two hours for some students. The costs and difficulties in transporting over 700 students a day have been continuing problems for the system. As many roads in the district are not paved, transportation is especially difficult during rainy weather or when roads are flooded from nearby irrigated fields.

The social cost of pupil transportation is also high. Because of the distances and time involved, busing has traditionally excluded 50% of the school's population from extracurricular activities. The difficulty in participating in after-school activities has only served to underscore the economic differences between students from farms and ranches and students from within the town. The former group has become known as the "cowboys," the latter unnamed, but a group just the same.

Over the years, many solutions or at least attempts at solutions have been offered for the transportation problem. Today, private cars have lessened the difficulties for those students old enough to drive, or those whose parents can take the time to drive them to and from school. One of the more imaginative solutions was proposed by the school board in 1931, when it passed a resolution that "all transportation be abolished for students not making an average grade" (Black 1940:67).

With some recent exceptions, the pattern in the Willcox Public Schools has been one of self-contained classrooms. In the elementary school, the basic curriculum has consisted of reading, mathematics, science, and language arts. In the last few years, team teaching has been implemented in the third grades. Learning centers have begun to be used in all grades. In addition to the 21 teachers, elementary students have the services of a full-time music teacher and a counselor. Although not a part of the elementary school itself, a special school for the

mentally retarded uses the facilities of the elementary buildings. This "school within a school" has students of all ages taught by two teachers and an aide. It draws students from several surrounding school districts.

The middle school, containing grades five through eight, is organized around departments. Team teaching among four teachers in the fifth and sixth grades has emerged as an alternative to the basic pattern since 1971. Subject areas covered in the middle school include physical education, math, language arts, social studies, science, wood shop, and music. The middle school is close to the high school, and shares with it the library and media center, cafeteria, and auditorium.

The high school is divided into seven departments, although the students are taught in grade levels. In 1974, the requirements for graduation from high school included 22 units of course work, 11 of which were elective. The courses offered at the high school were divided among the departments of social studies, language arts, science and mathematics, vocational education, business, physical, mental and health education, and fine arts. Curriculum concentration areas included college preparatory, vocational (including agriculture, business, and home sciences), and basic diploma. Although a number of new programs and courses of study have been added in the last decade, such as aeronautics and electronics, the core of the high school curriculum remained basically the same for 45 years (see Table 3-1).

Special federal programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance Act were in effect at that time, including a Title I reading program utilizing a portable classroom, a Title I program for migrant families, a Title II library program in both the high school and the elementary school, and a Title III adult basic education program. In addition, there was also a USDA federal lunch program. The only state

Table 3-1. Course Offerings for Willcox High School, 1931-32 and 1972-73*

1931-1932	1972-1973
Agronomy	Agriculture
English	English
Journalism	
Vocational English	
Algebra	Mathematics
Geometry	
Glee Club	Music
Music History and Appreciation	
Band	
Piano	
Biology	Science
Chemistry	Psychology
History	Social Studies
Bookkeeping	Business Education
Management Training	
Stenography	
Typing	
Physical Education	Physical Education and Health
Spanish	Spanish
Shop	Electronics
Shop Drawing	Industrial Arts
Shop Mathematics	
Domestic Science	Home Economics
Architecture	Individual Studies
	Aeronautics
	Driver Education

*(Source: Larsen 1932:31; Willcox High School Curriculum Guide, 1972)

program provided funds for purchasing materials for vocational training and career education. In 1972 approximately 35% of the district budget was derived from local taxes, 55% from state funds, and 10% from federal programs. About 1/3 of the elementary school funds and 1/20 of the high school funds came from the federal government.

The Willcox School System was formed when the Elementary School District No. 13 and the High School District No. 95 began operation under one school board in 1956. For budgetary reasons, the two districts remained separate legal entities until 1976. Separate elementary and high school budgets were drawn up each year, even though the two districts were governed by the same board of trustees. In 1971-72, the per-pupil expenditure in the elementary school was $658, while that in the high school was $1,047. (The average per-pupil annual expenditure for the state of Arizona, based on daily attendance, was $911.) The total school budget in 1970 was $702,145 for the elementary school, and $464,576 for the high school. The percentages of that total spent in each category for the elementary and high schools are shown in Table 3-2.

Students in the school system can choose from a variety of extra-curricular activities. The high school itself has over 16 clubs and organizations, and an extensive sports program which encompasses inter-scholastic competition in football, basketball, baseball, tennis, golf, volleyball, and track. Summer recreation programs sponsored by both the city and the school provide opportunities for swimming, tennis, and other sports. Little League and girls' softball are also successful summer activities. Rodeo, while not a part of the school program, is an important sport in the area, and the Sheriff's Posse Association of the Willcox area maintains an arena within the city limits which draws large crowds for both local and nationally sponsored rodeos.

Table 3-2. Percentage of Total Expenditure by Type in Willcox Elementary and High Schools, 1970-71.

Type of Expenditure	Elementary School District			High School District		
	Salary	Supplies	Total	Salary	Supplies	Total
Administrative	7	1	8	6	1	7
Instructional	61	3	64	50	5	55
Operational	4	2	6	3	4	7
Maintenance	1.5	1	2.5	2	2.5	4.5
Auxiliary Service	3	2	5	7	3	10
Fixed Charge	---	---	5	---	---	6
Contingency	---	---	0.5	---	---	0.5
Capital Outlay	---	---	9	---	---	10
Total	---	---	100%	---	---	100%

Although the school system must cope with a problem of frequent migration of its students from the district (about 8% yearly for the high school), the dropout rate is not high. For the high school, it has averaged 5% per year over the years from 1973 to 1976. Upon leaving high school, a large percentage of the students begin college studies (about 60% of the graduating class of 1970). Far fewer than those who begin college actually go on to complete it, but the high percentage entering indicates the degree to which a college education is valued.

Whether high school graduates go on to college or seek training in other areas, a larger number leave the community each year. A lack of opportunities for employment in the area accounts for most of this emigration. Like many small communities, the emigration of the graduating seniors is not always permanent, as many come back after a few years of college, military service, or jobs to seek work in the community.

Throughout Willcox's history, residents' participation in the school system has been informal rather than formal. It was only in 1971 that a Parent-Teachers Organization was formed in the town. Prior to this time, community members relied upon informal friendship networks with the teachers to learn about the schools. The civic community has been especially interested in maintaining the appearance of the school buildings.

One reason that the informal associations between the schools and the community have been paramount is that a large portion of the town's labor force has traditionally been employed by the schools. In 1971-72, the schools employed 120 people: 71 teachers, two counselors, nine instructional aides, seven clerical aides and secretaries, and 27 bus drivers. This amounted to almost ten percent of the labor force of

the district. With so many employees and their families, the distinction between school personnel and other community members is not as great as it might be in a community where the school staff forms only a small portion of the population. Of course, in many cases both husbands and wives are employed by the school district, yet the school staff is not isolated, but remains a very integral part of the community.

Teachers in the school system received a base salary in 1971-72 of $6,700, with an average salary of $9,511. By 1976 this base salary had increased to $8,600. The education level of the teachers was high; all had bachelor's degrees and 29 had master's degrees in 1971-72. Both counselors held master's degrees. An Abt Associates survey of the teachers in 1974 found that 67.4 percent had attended college outside of the state of Arizona. The average teaching experience in the Willcox system for the teachers in 1974 was found to be eight years. In the years prior to 1976, none of the administrators had come up through the ranks of teachers, although one principal had gained her position through the Rural Schools project. Tenured teachers made up 63.3 percent of the teaching staff in 1974. The pattern of teacher employment in the schools followed national trends: the elementary school was staffed almost entirely by women, and the high school was overwhelmingly staffed by men. In 1973, all teachers belonged to a local classroom teachers' association, an affiliate of the National Education Association. In the fall of 1974 a local teachers' union was formed as an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers. By 1976 the teachers' union had grown to include about a third of the teaching staff; the other two-thirds of the teachers either stayed with the teachers' association or became independent of either organization.

Teachers and administrators tend to take many classes at the College of Education at the University of Arizona in Tucson. In 1973, 59 percent of the teachers had taken some course work through the university, and 85 percent of the administrators had taken course work through the same institution.

Teachers tend to see the major problems of the school system in terms of the motivation and interest of students. For some, the presence of Mexican American students is thought to lower the general educational level of the ideal community. One principal remarked that the schools in Willcox were between one and two grades behind schools in the mid-west. He was unable to give any reasons to support this notion, but he did say that he thought the Mexican American children were just not motivated to learn.

The schools of Willcox have been in the ambiguous position of being both a part of the community, and therefore a reflection of it, and institutions which are strongly linked to regional and state levels of administration, personnel recruitment, and higher education. Teachers and administrators are regularly recruited from universities in the surrounding areas as well as distant states. According to an Abt Associates survey, 32.6% of Willcox teachers had some training in Arizona; 28.3% had training in the states of Texas, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, or California; 39.1% had training in other states. Secondary school teachers, including junior high, are more frequently recruited from states farther away. While in the community, teachers definitely become a part of it, participating in its clubs, churches, and organizations. But a division of sorts still exists between the educators and other community members. As far back as 1930, the high school

teachers, known as the "knotheads," competed with town businessmen in yearly basketball tournaments. By 1970, the appellation had been dropped, but the teams continue to be drawn on similar lines.

The school system in Willcox was a modest but competent system in 1972 when its Experimental Schools project was begun. The schools tended to attract teachers and administrators who were from other parts of the state and region who had come to Willcox by choice. Since the school was a major employer, a center for recreation, and a showcase institution for the community, residents in Willcox were genuinely interested in school activities.

The participation structure between the schools and residents was not based on committees or formal visitations of parents to their children's classrooms. Instead, residents participated in the institutional structure through employment, through attendance at major sports events, and through face-to-face interaction with school staff members. For example, members of the civic community could easily learn about what the schools were doing or make policy suggestions at the morning meeting of the coffee club where at least one school official, often the superintendent, met with downtown businessmen. Residents who were not a part of the civic or ethnic communities could meet with school teachers as fellow participants in the popular basketball leagues organized by younger adults in Willcox. Members of the ethnic community became familiar with the schools as janitors or cafeteria workers and in this way gained access to teachers and administrators who developed friendships with them. These participant structures[1] did not prove effective in all situations, but, because they had been developed over the many years since Willcox first supported a school system, residents instinctively placed confidence in them.

CONCEPTION: THE APPLICATION FOR THE RURAL SCHOOLS PROJECT

In March of 1970, a federal Experimental Schools program was proposed in the President's Message on Educational Reform and Renewal. The orientation of the Experimental Schools program within the U.S. Office of Education was notably directed toward comprehensive rather than piecemeal change. The many innovations and changes of the 1960s in American education were seen as attempts to deal only with one issue or part of school education. The Experimental Schools program was established to make it possible for school districts to change that trend by attempting comprehensive reviews and innovations in their organization. At the same time, there was to be systematic and comprehensive documentation and evaluation of these attempts at educational change in America.

From this base, the Office of Education called for school systems, both urban and rural, to apply for long-range (five-year) funding. The letter calling for applications from rural school districts to participate in the Experimental Schools program included these five project requirements:

(1) A fresh approach to curriculum based on local needs and goals;

(2) A review and reorganization of staffing to meet particular school system goals;

(3) An innovative use of time, space, and facilities;

(4) Active community involvement in the total project; and

(5) An administrative structure which supports the project and understands local strengths and needs.

A letter stating these requirements was sent in the beginning of March 1972 to all small rural school districts (i.e., those with a student population of less than 2,500), and applications were to be filed by April 15, 1972, a month and a half after the initial call for proposals. The letter announcing the program stressed that all grade levels and all students must be included in the local project, and that funds must not be used to support current activities or be a part of regular operating costs, but rather ought to supplement local costs.

Although the letters of application from school districts were bound by these and other requirements (the others dealing with descriptions of the current school system and its programs), the opportunity to develop a plan for comprehensive change based on locally determined needs and goals, and the prospect of five-year, continuous funding were strong inducements for school systems. In all, some 350 rural school districts wrote letters of interest for the competition.

In the Willcox school system, the superintendent had built a system of administration which drew firm lines between his staff and the teaching staff. The superintendent had been with the system for six years, and some community members as well as some teachers were questioning his effectiveness. The system had begun to suffer from divisiveness. In 1971, a Parent-Teacher Organization was formed for the express purpose of getting rid of the superintendent and his federal programs.

Wider trends affected the school system as well. A decline in student involvement and reduced success of school programs such as reading were being felt in the community, as they were felt nationwide.

It was into this social milieu that the letter from the Experimental Schools program calling for applications from rural school districts

was delivered. By no means were the town, community or school hopelessly divided, but seeds of division had been sown, and the general picture of the community was one of uneasiness. Economic, social, and educational conditions were in flux.

Within a period of a month and a half, the middle school principal, with the aid of the superintendent and a few members of the teaching staff, wrote a letter of interest for an Experimental Schools project in Willcox. That letter satisfied the requirements of the announcement sent out by the U.S. Office of Education. First it described the present strengths of the school system:

1. General community support for the school system.
2. A low pupil-teacher ratio.
3. Adequate facilities for a variety of programs.
4. A cohesive administration team.
5. An active K-12 Curriculum Council.
6. Proximity to the University of Arizona and to two community colleges.
7. Cultural diversity of the residents of the community.

The proposal identified some significant weaknesses in current educational programs:

1. We feel a definite need to examine and revise our curriculum. Five main problems related to the curriculum are most apparent at this time.
   a. It lacks articulation and coordination in scope and sequence from grades K-12.
   b. It appears to be unrealistic and not relevant to the future needs that our students will face within the next ten to twenty years.
   c. As a total district we need to give serious attention to many innovative trends in education. This needs to be done systematically and in terms of our own unique needs as a small rural school district.
   d. We are constantly faced with a lack of time for curriculum study and development.

e. There is a need for funds to study the curriculum and implement appropriate changes.

2. There is a need to develop a formalized structure for community involvement in order that all residents of the district have an opportunity to participate in the development of school programs.

3. We are faced with a lack of faculty and staff cohesiveness.

4. We do not have programs which build on the cultural diversity of our area--especially the Mexican American heritage which is present. (Willcox Public Schools, April 1972:4-5)

The letter of interest then went on to outline the kind of project that the administrators wanted to design. The major features of the project included most of the then-current innovations in American education: differentiated staffing, more in-service training, a comprehensive curriculum from the kindergarten to the high school, a summer program, a community school program, and a democratic administration (see Appendix A for the entire text of the application letter).

The letter was not publicized in the school or community because the superintendent felt that premature publicity on the subject was not advisable since the application might be rejected.

A few weeks after school officially closed in May 1972, the superintendent received a telephone call from an official of the Experimental Schools program in Washington, D.C. informing him that Willcox had been selected as one of the six school districts to receive a planning grant. An official telegram from the Experimental Schools division of the U.S. Office of Education was sent to Willcox on June 29, 1972, formally announcing that a Rural Schools project would be a part of the Willcox Public Schools the next week. The Arizona Range News ran a first-page article announcing the project:

Willcox Rural Schools Project Gets Underway

> The Willcox Public Schools System is in the process of implementing its Rural Schools Project planning grant activities. This grant in the amount of $46,500 was awarded to the school district in July, 1972. By February 15, 1973, the Willcox Schools are required to submit a formal proposal to the U.S. Office of Education. . . .
>
> [The principal] emphasized the unique nature of this project as evidenced by the enthusiasm of the federal agency and the almost total lack of federal guidelines regarding the project. . . .
>
> The Willcox Board of Education formally approved this project at their regular meeting on Wednesday, July 5. The Board commented that receiving this grant was quite an honor for the school district and the community. It was also mentioned that very seldom does a small school have the time and money to involve the community and the school staff in planning so thoroughly for the future (Arizona Range News 1972, No. 23).

INFANCY: THE PROJECT IS PLANNED

The principals, aides and teachers who had formed a group interested in participating in the Experimental Schools program were extremely happy that Willcox was awarded a $46,500 grant to plan for five years of educational innovation. In his telephone conversation with the superintendent, the director of the Experimental Schools program made it sound as though Willcox was all but guaranteed five additional years of funding, provided a workable plan was developed. The superintendent quickly put one teacher on half-time salary as the project director so that he could work with the middle school principal and gave the job of documenting the planning year to a reading aide. Between August of 1972 and March of 1973 these key people worked on surveys, committees, and writing sessions in order to produce the five-year plan required by the grant.

The planners of the project left a wealth of information which can be used to analyze the planning year. The reading aide who had been appointed "documentor" of the project wrote a log of the project's activities during the planning year which included meetings, telephone conversations with Washington officials, newspaper articles, and other project material.

All in all, the planning year was perhaps the most exciting full year of project activity. During that year most of the project aspects mentioned in the application letter were tried: a "steering committee" made up of many people from the civic community was formed which acted as a kind of auxiliary school board and was able to bring a number of new ideas into the system; the planners personally delivered a community survey to every household in the school district; later, over twenty small committees were created to look into such diverse ideas as a community theater program, new directions in physical education, and debate and public speaking.

The official letter notifying Willcox of the planning grant was dated June 10, 1972. One year later, in June of 1973, the principal of the middle school who had designed the project, the superintendent who had supported it, the project director who had managed it during the planning year, and the documentor who had described it had all left the Willcox Public School system. One school board member had been recalled, a 6% budget override bond issue had been voted down, and the high school principal had moved on to another job. After a number of years of relative tranquility, the Willcox Public School system was faced with major changes. The creation of a Parent Teachers Organization, the results of the bond election, recall vote, and subsequent board election all

indicated that community dissatisfaction with the way the schools were being run had reached a point at which major changes were in order. The year itself was the focal point of a number of currents running in the community and schools, some routine and expected, others limited to the personalities involved. While the world of the school system was being reorganized through these pressures, the Plan for Comprehensive Change in the schools was written. By June of 1973 it had been accepted by the National Institute of Education. Here was a first-rate test for the project staff: could it withstand the drastic change-over in administration and implementation as it began to operate? This question signaled the ultimate question of the planning year: to whom did the Rural School project belong?

Stages of Planning

The planning year for the RSP can be divided into four successive stages (see Fig. 3-1). During the summer of 1972, the basic organization of the project was created. A Project Director was chosen, and the group which was to write the formal planning document was solidified. During the fall stage, a community-wide survey was carried out, and conceptualization about the project proceeded from the data gathered in the survey. The third stage took place during the late fall and early winter. This stage was made up of activities of the numerous "study" and "steering" committee meetings held during this time. The final stage was the actual writing of the Plan, which occurred during January and February of 1973. By June, official notice was received in Willcox that the one-year planning grant would be extended to a five-year contract. It had been locally understood all along, however, that

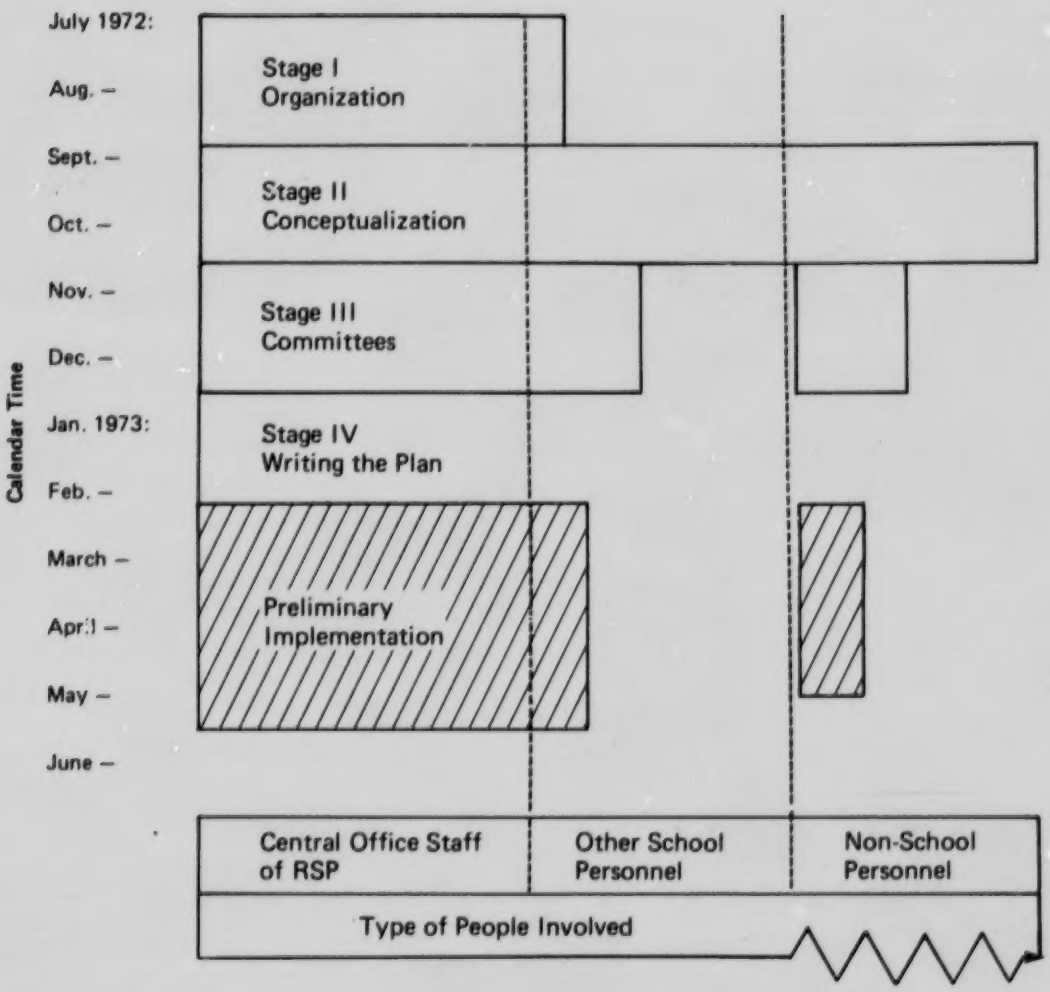

Figure 3-1. The extent of participation in the planning year by calendar time and type of people involved

this would be the case. Informal conversations with Washington officials during the planning year resulted in a confidence that the Plan would be accepted and Willcox would receive the five-year contract to carry out the Plan.

The Organizational Stage. During this first stage of the planning year, an "organizational team" was created. This group, which served as the central staff of the RSP throughout the remainder of the year, included the middle school principal who had spearheaded the writing of the letter of interest, a "project director" who was a middle school teacher, and a documentor. During these first few months this group met almost daily. They set up an office in the middle school, hired a secretary, and began the task of writing a five-year plan. In July of 1972, the superintendent and the middle school principal went to Washington to meet with the Experimental Schools (ES) staff. This was the first of what was to become a yearly summer meeting between ES/Washington officials and Willcox educators. At this first meeting, Willcox participants felt that the Experimental Schools staff were as excited and interested in the idea of a five-year program of innovation as they were. Later in the month, a consultant to the Institute came out to Willcox for a "site visit." The consultant was taken on a tour of the schools and was especially shown the new library or "media center" which was later to become the locus of one of the project programs. The consultant was also taken downtown to a luncheon meeting of the local Kiwanis Club where he met some of the businessmen of the town.

But even as the project staff reveled in the excitement of the early months of planning and proudly showed an important Washington

consultant around the town, community displeasure with the superintendent, the schools, and the project reached a high point. The Parent Teachers Organization successfully mounted a school board recall election which culminated in the recall of a board member who was extremely sympathetic to the project and had been on the school board for nine years. He was a Harvard-educated pharmacist who was considered the town intellectual. Although many teachers thought he was conservative, as one put it, "At least Tim understands what you're talking about when you discuss the need for more academics in the program here." Tim was defeated by a local rancher. The project log commented as follows:

> A school board recall election was held July 18, 1972, the day Steve and Jennifer returned from Washington. A school board member who had served for nine years and who was fully cognizant of this project was recalled. A new man who had taken a negative position on federal aid in general (not especially directed toward this project) was elected to the board (Willcox Public Schools 1973b:5).

The school system had a second problem in getting the planning grant approved by the Arizona State Board of Education. The state board had a policy of requiring approval on all non-Arizona programs in the schools. When the principal took the letter of interest and the commitment by the Institute to the state board, she found that the board members were initially not in favor of getting involved with a new federal program for rural schools. When the planning grant came up for a vote, it barely passed. The state board was reflecting a general suspicion of federal aid to education that was later to become prevalent in the Willcox system. Some years later the third superintendent during the project period expressed the sentiment of the state board at the local level when he told a group of businessmen:

> The problem isn't the state legislature. The problem with the school system is the federal government. Now I don't say 'federal government' like it is a dirty word, but it seems that some of these agencies are created because some bureaucrat doesn't have anything to do. There are more federal guidelines with regard to due process and all of that than you can imagine. Now it gives me cause for concern when the national president of the teachers' union says that the only thing good to come out of education is federal. He made a statement that local school boards are stupid, ignorant, and biased. Now that gives me cause for concern. But the constitution says that education of the young should be left to the states. Now it seems that half of our budget comes from federal programs and all of them have strings attached.

When the principal took the idea of the planning grant and five-year funding for comprehensive change to the state board, very few strings were perceived to be attached to the grant. She and the other project staff saw the ES/Washington officials as interested only in Willcox's plan. The project was to be locally designed and implemented. Even in this first stage ES/Washington officials attempted to convince Willcox educators that the responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of the project rested with them, not with the federal government. Weekly telephone calls were made to Washington, and discussion centered around the development of a local constituency for the project through the creation of citizen committees and a "steering committee" for the project. The committee that was created reflected what the planners saw as the major groups in Willcox society:

Parents
Small businesses
Large businesses
Farm and ranch
Mexican American
Teacher
Student
Administrator

Board member
City government employee - elected
Service club - Women
Service club - Men

(Willcox Public Schools 1973b:23)

The Conceptualization Stage. The second stage of the planning year was dominated by the locally produced community survey which was designed in three parts. One part was written for teachers, another for students, and a third for community members. Besides this survey, the second stage saw the filling of positions in the Steering Committee. Eleven people representing many of the categories listed above began meeting on September 21, 1972. They were to be the "overseers" of the project. From the information gained from the survey, the central staff chose teachers, students, and community members who were interested in the ideas which the project represented to form a number of committees. These committees would explore some of the directions in which the school system could move with the project.

A talk given by the project director, a middle school teacher who had been given release time by the superintendent, illustrates the guiding assumptions of the project at this time:

> Martin Luther King said several years ago, "I have a dream." To me he meant his idea of a more perfect society where people would all become suddenly color blind. . . .
>
> It seems to me that we teachers must become dreamers this year also. For we have the golden opportunity to try out those hidden dreams about education in the next five years. We have the opportunity, but we must act before it slips through our fingers. . . .
>
> Suppose someone told you that money wasn't a limiting factor any more in the Willcox Schools. Suppose someone asked you to dream some dreams about what our schools could become in the next five years. Suppose someone told you that we could put these dreams into test classroom situations and try them

out against our present efforts from kindergarten through high school in any subject area we chose or all subject areas if we chose.

Would you accept that assignment? I truly hope so, because that's precisely what the Rural Schools Project is all about.

Outside influences also continued to affect the RSP during this stage. The project officer from ES/Washington suggested the format for the first "Quarterly Report." Weekly telephone conversations between Washington and Willcox continued. Consulting firms from the major cities of the Southwest began contacting Willcox once they had learned of the project and offered their services in all phases of planning: writing, evaluation, training, and so on.

The Committee Stage. The third stage of the process was dominated by the meetings of committees created by central Rural Schools project staff in the planning stage, and by interest in the survey. Besides the "Steering Committee" described earlier, 22 committees were formed with an average of six members each. Members were asked to serve on committees if in answering the project questionnaire they had indicated an interest in a given area of education. All residents who showed interest were invited to take part in the committee process. The following topics of interest were gleaned from the community survey to serve as the basis for each committee:

Adult Education
Art
Athletic
Behavior and Manners
Bilingual-Bicultural
Career Education
Guidance and Counseling
Debate and Public Speaking
Early Childhood
Environmental Studies
Extracurricular Programs
Health Education
Independent Study
Materials Center
Mathematics
Middle School
Music
Reading Improvement
Special Education
Summer School
Vocational
Writing, English, Language Arts

The number of meetings held by each of these "study committees" ranged from one to three, with about half of the committees meeting only once.

The task of the steering committee during this period was to decide on a "central theme" or goal to which the project might be directed. After much work on the problem, a meeting held in early December resulted in the writing of the "Central Theme":

> To develop within the Willcox School District a Comprehensive program, which will be subjected to constant re-evaluation, a program at all educational levels, which will ultimately produce students who, in addition to achieving academic proficiencies, will also have an ability and desire to learn, adjust to change, have positive attitudes towards themselves, society, and life in general and an acceptance of a personal responsibility to society.

The writing of the "central theme" was a major turning point in the planning year. A few days before the theme had been written, the documentor wrote in her log that the project seemed to be faltering; it had no direction or real purpose. On December 5 another site visit was made by the consultant to ES/Washington and one of the ES/Washington project officers. After an ice-cream social was held in their honor in the high school cafeteria, the steering committee met for several hours and, according to the documentor, the central theme seemed to arise out of their collective consciousness. Participants in the meeting later recalled that the meeting seemed especially exciting and emotionally fulfilling.

> There is no way to record the excitement we feel about this [the central theme]:
>
> 1. It obviously deals almost totally with affective areas and came from a Steering Committee that began by wanting a winning football team.
>
> 2. No one told them any of this. We began by saying, "Here's a pot of money, let's dream"--and they and we did--we dreamed programs and equipment and it was all great.

3. We did not ever structure them into doing this. We have felt the flush of failure at not beginning with a central theme, but obviously they were not ready to write it prior to this time--and frankly you have to shudder to think what it would have been like had they been forced to write it in September.

So our steering committee, a farmer, his wife, two students, a machinist (very up town, but still...), an electric co-op manager, and an auto parts store owner conceived a fantastic unbelievable "hope" for our project.

Never, oh never, will anyone connected with the Rural Schools Project in Willcox ever doubt that democracy works! It's slow, it's halting, it's difficult, but people, just people, given the pot at the end of the rainbow can turn away and say, 'let's think about the kids.' (Willcox Public Schools 1973b:112-113)

The writing of the central theme was the last activity of the committees. It allowed the project staff to begin with the actual writing of the plan which was due in the early spring.

The Writing Stage. The final stage of the planning year was the actual writing of the Plan for Comprehensive Change in the Willcox Public Schools. The writing itself was the product of the central staff of the RSP, and was carried out in order to submit the plan by the February 15, 1973 deadline. The writing brought together the committee recommendations, "central theme" and the various guidelines from ES/Washington into one Plan. After the Plan was received in Washington, subsequent communication between Willcox and Washington resulted in some minor changes, the most visible being the deletion of a "Continuous Mathematics Program" from the project. The five "Major Components" of the project, as listed in the Plan (Willcox Public Schools 1973a:23-74) dealt with Curriculum; the Community and the School; Staff Training and Utilization; Time, Space, and Facilities; and Administration, Organization, and Governance. The Curriculum Component was further divided into the following facets: Early Childhood Education,

Bilingual-Multicultural Education, Continuous Progress Reading, Media Centers, and Counseling and Guidance.

Influences on the Planning Process

The writing of the Plan took place in a shifting community context, as has been described earlier. Extra-community influences also affected the design of the project. One was the involvement of Washington officials. The goals of the Experimental Schools program, as described in the announcement to school districts, were to aid small school districts in creating more responsive systems through comprehensive programs of educational change.

The Washington staff of the Experimental Schools program kept in close contact with the school system throughout the four stages of the planning process. Communication proceeded through weekly telephone calls to the central staff of the RSP and the school system superintendent, correspondence, "site visits" by ES/Washington personnel to Willcox, and a visit by Willcox personnel to Washington.

This communication between ES/Washington officials and those of the Willcox Rural Schools Project was highly valued during the planning process. Subsequent years held different patterns of values. The federal personnel were highly regarded by the Willcox RSP staff. For example, after the visit to Washington by the superintendent and middle school principal, the Log summarizes their reactions to Experimental Schools officials as follows:

> The two administrators were perhaps subconsciously expecting to meet Bureaucracy, in Kafka's "The Castle" sense, "red tape, impotency, inefficiency, despair..." and in fact, they have continued, and continued, to comment since their return about the fantastic freedom from all these things that the Experimental Schools staff exemplified. Comments:

> "never seen people as fine, as enthusiastic and excited."
> "They are really a fantastic group."
> "They are totally committed to the idea of purposeful change."
> ". . .the freedom they had was difficult to believe."
> Our Willcox people were particularly impressed with [. . .], Director of the [Rural] Project, (we're all impressed that it was a woman) and with [. . .], Director of Experimental Schools. But as they have pointed out, it is unfair to single out any one person because everyone they met on the Experimental Schools staff was really outstanding. . .
> On the whole, however, the trip and the day-long meetings were deemed an outstanding success and the two administrators returned excited and eager to begin. (Willcox Public Schools 1973b:4-5)

The relationship which developed between the Willcox RSP staff and the overall school administration with the Experimental School staff was one of "partnership." The Willcox staff considered itself to be on equal footing with Washington with regard to responsibilities, resources, and a commitment to educational change. Foster (1967:217) describes this kind of relationship as a "colleague contract":

> Colleague contracts are phrased horizontally, and can be thought of as symmetrical, since each partner, in position and obligations, mirrors the other.

The importance of this type of relationship between the Experimental Schools program and the Willcox RSP is that it later served as a model for the local project. The "partnership" which the school and community shared in educating became one of the "assumptions" of the Plan (Willcox Public Schools 1973a:14). As a result of this approach to the project, the final plan reflected a more horizontal or broad-based administration scheme than had previously existed, one which broadened the lines of support, responsibility, and advice in the system. The organizational structure was to include various community advisory

committees, the school system curriculum council, as well as the principals, Rural Schools project coordinators, and the school board.

In subsequent years, this "colleague" relationship between the Willcox Rural Schools project and the federal agency changed to a "patron-client" relationship, as described by Foster (1976:217):

> Patron-client contracts are thus phrased vertically, and they can be thought of as asymmetrical, since each partner is quite different from the other in position and obligations.

Beneath the surface of the "colleague" relationship which existed during the planning process were the different assumptions held by each of the two groups. The Experimental Schools branch of the National Institute of Education had specific goals for the local projects to work toward, as described earlier. The other key features of the ES program were comprehensiveness and time. Besides requiring local school systems to design a program which included all age levels and students of the system, the ES program provided for five-year funding so that innovative projects would have a chance to run their course before a decision would have to be made concerning their complete incorporation into the system (i.e., local funding would then support them). "Phase in," in the incorporation of successful "components" into the local budget, was a major requirement.

In Willcox, a slightly different conception formed the basis for the initial planning process. The talk given to the curriculum council by the project director in September of 1972 cited above illustrates the kind of "free rein" that the initiators of the project envisioned. The range of committees which were created out of the September survey reflected this assumption of the RSP staff. The process was to be nothing short of

a comprehensive reevaluation of the school program. The schools could become more responsive to community needs and desires through the kinds of programs the committees were discussing.

The communication between the Rural Schools project staff and the ES/Washington staff continued unabated throughout the year (see Table 3-3). By January, when the writing of the final Plan for Willcox began in earnest, an outline format was sent out from Washington. The final Plan submitted by Willcox followed this outline closely.

Between August, 1972 (Stage I) and February, 1973 (Stage IV) the partnership relationship of Willcox public Schools Rural Schools project and ES/Washington resulted in a document outlining the future Willcox Project which was locally written, to be sure, but whose basic organization reflected the assumptions held by ES/Washington about the direction of educational change needed in small school systems. It is for this reason that many people who contributed their time and ideas during the committee stage (Stage III) felt alienated from the project by the time June of 1973 arrived.

> Anthropologist: What about the committees? Were you on any, wasn't that an example of community involvement?
>
> Resident: Oh, yeah. I was on one of those committees. We met twice. We even drew up some recommendations which we thought were pretty good. But what happened to them? When they wrote up the plan, they threw out all of the recommendations. They just wrote what they wanted to.

The specific programs within each of the components reflected the ideas of the Willcox Rural Schools project. The intention here is not to draw the conclusion that the project was not a local creation. It derived an emphasis from the community residents, and it reflected concerns about

Table 3-3. A Chronology of the Willcox Rural Schools Project from its Inception Until the End of the Planning Year

Date	Project Status	Major Events of Influence
Feb. 1972	Announcement of program sent from OE to Willcox.	Middle school principal decides to write a letter of application.
March 1972	Application letter sent to OE.	Letter approved by superintendent and other principals before it is sent to OE.
June 1972	OE announces that Willcox will receive $46,000 planning grant for project.	Middle school aide begins writing documentary log of project. Project announced in local newspapers.
July 1972	Planning staff organized.	Visit by OE official to Willcox. School board president loses recall election over his support of superintendent and federal programs.
Sept. 1972	Planning begins; components are conceptualized by staff.	Survey of households in Willcox carried out.
Dec. 1972	Rural Schools Project citizen committees meet.	OE official visits Willcox and helps in creation of the "central theme" of the project.
Feb. 1973	Plan for Comprehensive Change completed.	Project staff turns from working on Plan to working with teachers.
May 1973	NIE requests revisions of Plan.	Superintendent, Project Director, Middle and High School principals resign from Willcox school system.

the ability of school pupils in Willcox to read adequately, to take pride in their diverse backgrounds, and to take responsibility for their education. The question in the minds of the people who had been involved in the committees was "Why did some programs get dropped from the final plan and others included?"

One explanation advanced was that the federal monitoring of the local project resulted in an influence on the feasibility, need, and value of the programs which were finally approved. This seemed to be a case of "federal control," a highly feared state of affairs in the school system as well as in the community. This ambiguity was underscored by the events of the final part of the 1972-73 school year in Willcox. With the departure of the superintendent and the principal members of the RSP staff, the "ownership" of the project was being questioned, as was noted earlier. With a loss of administrators who were willing to take responsibility for the ownership of the project, the conclusion that it was just a "federal" (as opposed to local) activity became reasonable.

An Abt Associates survey of the professional staff of the schools in 1974 found that the teachers saw themselves as having very little influence on the planning process as compared to other groups in the community. Thirty-five percent of the staff thought that the Experimental Schools program in Washington D.C. had a great deal of influence on the planning process. Teachers did not feel that the project was the answer to all of the district's educational and financial problems. In the same survey, only 44% of the teachers considered the project a "good idea."

DISCUSSION

The Willcox Experimental Schools project faced three major problems at the planning stage: Lack of cohesiveness and logical input; lack of agreement about project "ownership;" and lack of a clear understanding of either the local or federal agenda.

The conception and infancy of the Willcox Experimental Schools project did not follow a national model of educational change, even though both the federal officials and Willcox educators wished it to. There was no period of "needs assessment," no logical use of "community input" which led to the writing of the final plan. The only needs assessment that the district experienced during the planning year was informal. A coalition of teachers and residents thought that the superintendent was too progressive for the community and brought about the recall of the school board president to show their displeasure with the superintendent's actions. He took these changes to heart and resigned at the end of the year.

This raised the question of ownership of the project. On the one hand, the project could be said to belong to the administration of the school system. Its design was the product of numerous committees made up of teachers and other residents, to be sure, but its organization reflected the power and responsibility of the individual administrators who did the writing of the final plan. On the other hand, it could be said to belong to the "community" itself. This view was supported by the federal contracting agency, the National Institute of Education, as they understood the Willcox school board to be willing to continue what had been started during the planning year. This ambiguity became an issue in succeeding years. If, in fact, the ownership rested with the

individuals who wrote the plan, then perhaps it had no reason to exist after they left. One resident discussed the matter soon after I arrived in the community:

> You know, I don't even know why that project is still here, anyway. We got rid of that last superintendent, and when we were rid of him, we thought we were rid of that Rural Schools thing, too.

The idea that the project belonged to the individuals who wrote the Plan was not limited to non-school personnel. Teachers, administrators, and the "coordinators" who were hired to implement the plan saw one of the major drawbacks as the lack of continuity between the "planners" and the "implementors." As an administrator said,

> It's not our project. We were all hired on after everything had been planned. How do we know what those people had in mind? There's no one left who had anything to do with the planning at all.

A distinction is often made in social sciences between a conception of individuals and one of persons (cf. Goodenough 1969, Keesing 1973). The term "individual" refers to the unique attributes of specific people: personality, physical features, and so on. The term "person" is used to refer to the attributes of the individual which are the result of the position and status that individual holds in society. The person of a school superintendent, for example, has a series of rights and obligations which are exercised when that individual acts as a superintendent. These might include the right to an office, personal files on teachers, a special automobile, and so on. Obligations can include physical presence at school activities, communication with school board members, public relations work with non-school people in the community, and so on. For analytic purposes, it need not be of

concern who the specific individual is who serves as superintendent. The rights and obligations remain regardless of the individual.

The final events of the Rural Schools project planning year can be understood in this light. The model of ownership held by ES/ Washington, as well as by the school board and many others in the community, understood the project as an attribute of the school superintendent, not of the individual who filled that position. It just so happened that the individual who filled the position was leaving. The report, the plan for comprehensive change which served as a starting point of the project, was not his, it was the schools'. But others, such as the resident cited above, understood the project to be an attribute of the individuals who created it. As such, it constituted a part of their individual baggage, and ought to have been taken with them when they left. This was only one of the problems which the project faced by the end of the planning year.

The school district began its involvement in the Rural Schools project despite staff changes. The middle school principal, the project director, and the high school principal had all decided early in the planning year that they would leave the district at the end of the school year, which they did. This did not dilute the energy and motivation that they put into the writing of the plan, as all of the project staff had a very strong desire to see the project succeed. Indeed, the middle school principal returned to Willcox several times during the first year of implementation to see how the project was doing.

The real needs assessment of the project was the "pot of gold" mentioned so often in the project log. The promise of supplementary funding was important at a time when the local taxpayers had soundly

voted down a budget override (state law in Arizona requires that school district residents vote on any budget increase greater than 6% of the previous year's school budget). In addition to participation in the Experimental Schools program, the Willcox school district also applied for federal reading funds, career education funds, migrant education funds, adult education funds, and other federal programs during the 1972-73 school year. It was not the pressing needs of an educational system trying to face the 1970s which led Willcox to apply for the program, but the pressing need for money. The money which the local system could draw from its tax base was adequate for running the schools as they stood, but it was not adequate for bringing in new people, new programs, and new ideas which were seen as vital by the writers of the plan.

The real "needs assessment" for Experimental Schools projects came from the federal government. Consultants and agency officials in Washington, D.C. were convinced that small, highly specified grants to school systems were not working. Short term and "piecemeal" change did not seem to have changed American educational systems very much during the 1960s. In their place ES/Washington decided to try "comprehensive" and "longitudinal" change.

In other words, the Willcox system and the other nine small school districts which became involved with the Experimental Schools program were the results of the needs assessment of the federal educational establishment, carried out with the help of university- and foundation-based consultants.

The significant feature of the relationship between Willcox and Washington during the planning year and the application period was

the idea of a federal-local partnership in planned change. However, the partnership was weighted in favor of the federal government. The history of the Rural Schools project after the end of the planning year became one of local interaction with a federal agency. At times the interaction was an adaptation to federal demands, at other times a careful interference with the federal agency, and at times a reaction to federal insensitivity.

CHAPTER FOUR. THE PLAN BECOMES A REALITY: STAFFING THE RURAL SCHOOLS PROJECT

> Except for the Rural Schools secretary, the Rural Schools project staff is new. The RSP director and superintendent of schools began his job on July 1. The administrative assistant for educational programs started on July 15, with the Community-Schools coordinator reporting two days later. The media specialist began work August 1, followed by the bilingual-multicultural coordinator on August 13, the early childhood teacher, August 28, the . . . evaluator on August 22, and the middle school counselor on September 17.
>
> As each new staff member reported to work, he/she was introduced to those already on the job. Each was given an overview of the Rural Schools project, the Willcox schools, and the community. (Willcox Rural Schools project, Quarterly Report No. 1)

The period between May 1973, when the school board in Willcox was notified that five-year funding was available for the project, and September of that year was the most critical time of the project's life. That period of time was a juncture between planning for a program of change and actually carrying one out. During these four months a new superintendent was hired, a staff of change agents was brought together, and the individual programs or "components" of the local project took their form. As the project took its first symbolic steps out of the office where it was written into the school classrooms and community, it took the shape which it was to have through its maturity. This chapter describes the change in project funding status from a grant to a three-year contract that was

accompanied by changes in the scope of the project and in the role the community played in the school system. The point of this chapter is that the Experimental Schools project in Willcox took on a new character as it began implementation in the schools: it turned out to be a project hardly recognizable to the people who had written the plan.

In the previous chapter it was noted that the superintendent of the Willcox schools left at the end of the planning year, as did the other people central to the planning process. For some, the break from the Willcox schools was a chance to use what they had learned during the planning year in new administrative positions. The middle school principal, for example, went on to an administrative post in the Phoenix school system. For others, the turnover in staff and the influx of people hired to run the project was unsettling. The project documentor of the planning year, for example, was not offered the project assistant position she desired, and so left the school system to return to college. This shift in the set of people who made up the Willcox Rural Schools project extended to the National Institute of Education. As school began during the project's first year in the schools, a new project officer was assigned to Willcox by the Institute.

The period of project start-up was an exciting time. The Plan for Comprehensive Change had been approved, and for a brief time the people brought in to carry out the plan had the opportunity to change education in Willcox from top to bottom. Community participation in school decision making was high, teachers returned from their summer jobs and vacations ready to begin a new year, and the National Institute of Education had given Willcox extensive funding. But, by the time a month and a half of school had gone by, this excitement had become muffled. Instead of

carrying out a project which would change the schools, the coordinators learned to work within their own domains. By October first, the dream that had taken form in the Plan for Comprehensive Change would become only a memory. The chronology of the project for this period is summarized in Table 4-1.

FROM PLANNING TO PROJECT: A PERIOD OF PREPARATION

If events of educational change are measured as they occur during the regular school years of a district, it would appear that a project such as that in Willcox had a "planning stage" followed by an "implementation stage." During the 1972-73 school year the district wrote and submitted a plan, and during the 1973-74 school year that plan was put into action in the schools. In fact, the project in Willcox indicates that the move from planning to action is not direct, but contains a period of preparation for action.[1]

For the Willcox project, this period of preparation included hiring a new superintendent who would be the local project director, re-writing the plan to fit the school system under a new administration, hiring a staff to run the project, and taking the project into the classrooms and community. During this period of preparation, the project had characteristics of the planning year and of actual implementation. One feature of the planning year in Willcox was the broad participation of residents in the committee structure which formed the basis of the Plan. The project succeeded in bringing residents into committees to discuss specific educational innovations as well as a "steering committee," an august body which served as a kind of school board to the project. During implementation of the project these committees ceased to function even though each component

Table 4-1. A Chronology of the Willcox Rural Schools Project During the Change from Grant to Contract

Date	Project Status	Major Events of Influence
June 1973	Planning grant ends	New superintendent hired, documentor or "level one evaluator" resigns.
July 1973	Project begins implementation on a three-year contract	New superintendent visits NIE officials in Washington. Administrative assistant and two principals hired. Five people hired as "coordinators."
August 1973	Project begins in schools.	Coordinators begin to define responsibilities as either teachers or administrators. NIE official visits Willcox. Case study research begins.
Sept 1973	NIE requests further revision of Plan.	Superintendent expands weekly staff meetings to include all Rural School project staff and administrators of schools.
Oct. 1973	First Quarterly Report written and sent to NIE.	Bilingual coordinator resigns.

was required to have a citizens' committee involved with it. But during the phase of preparation, community participation in the project remained at a high level.

Another characteristic of the planning year which pervaded the time of preparation and even continued into implementation was the writing of the Plan. Although the Plan was accepted in the spring and formed a portion of the contract between the National Institute of Education and Willcox, it was extensively rewritten during the preparation phase. Wording was changed, behavioral objectives were added, and a section which provided a hypothetical "walk through" the Willcox schools during the project was deleted.

After the preparation period, the need to write the plan decreased. But the reports required by ES/Washington had the effect of continuing this writing process. Quarterly contract reports were turned in every three months during implementation, except for the third year, when the writing of an "interim report and extension document" for final two-year funding took the place of the quarterly reports.

The time of preparation was a time when the project became personified in the six coordinators or program specialists who were brought into the school district. No longer was the project associated with a few people in the schools who were seeking federal funds. The four programs of curriculum became associated with specific coordinators: a reading specialist, a bilingual coordinator, an early childhood coordinator, and a media coordinator. The idea of encouraging a "community schools partnership" became embodied in a community schools director. Evaluation of the project became the job of a sixth member of the Rural Schools staff.

A major task of the preparation period of the project's life was to reverse the direction of the project. The application letter and the planning year were both aimed at securing federal funding. The project during these first two phases was directed outward. The writers of the letter and the plan used the strengths and weaknesses of the Willcox community to create a picture which would convince federal decision makers that the schools were a place where change was needed and possible. The writing of these two documents was like winding fishing lures which were later cast out to the waters of federal aid to education. Both lures worked; the district received $46,000 to plan for change and then an average of $250,000 a year to implement it.[2] Now that the money was secured, the project had to become directed inward; it had to spend its energies in a way that resulted in changes in the schools and community. Whereas the Plan had served as a public relations device, akin to the "Community Prospectus" that the Willcox Chamber of Commerce sends to prospective residents and businesses, during the preparation period it had to become a set of directions about how to achieve a new and different school system. The difficulty arose from the fact that the Plan had been written for one purpose by one set of people, but had to become a useful charter for another set of people. The new coordinators had no way of knowing that the primary function of the Plan had been to convince the government to fund the project and bring these very people into the community. When they read through the document and found little to guide them in their jobs, they were led into believing that the original writers had left much unsaid about educational change in Willcox.

MORE ADMINISTRATORS: THE FIRST VISIBLE EFFECT OF THE RURAL SCHOOLS PROJECT

Prior to the 1972-73 school year, the Willcox school system maintained a traditional administrative structure. Each of the three schools was under the direction of a principal, and district business was the job of the superintendent. Federal programs were handled by the principals in each school. One of the first effects of the Experimental Schools project had on the district was an increase in the number of administrators. During the planning year, a teacher was released for half-time work with the project and a secretary was hired. As the quotation from the first quarterly report presented at the beginning of this chapter illustrates, implementation began with the hiring of several new people who served as "coordinators" in the project. Although several of these new coordinators subsequently aligned themselves with the teaching staff, the initial impression on the school system was that the project had increased the administrative staff (see Fig. 4-1).

Administrative Ideals: A Democratic Institution

The Plan itself was designed to change the administrative structure of the system. The underlying theme of the change was to spread out the decision-making process throughout the system so as to involve teachers, non-certified employees and parents in the business that had traditionally been handled by the superintendent and three principals. In the words of the Plan:

> By distributing administrative authority and involving the community in the decision-making process, the responsibility for education will be diffused. We see this more horizontal organizational structure as a key to effecting a more responsive, democratic institution.

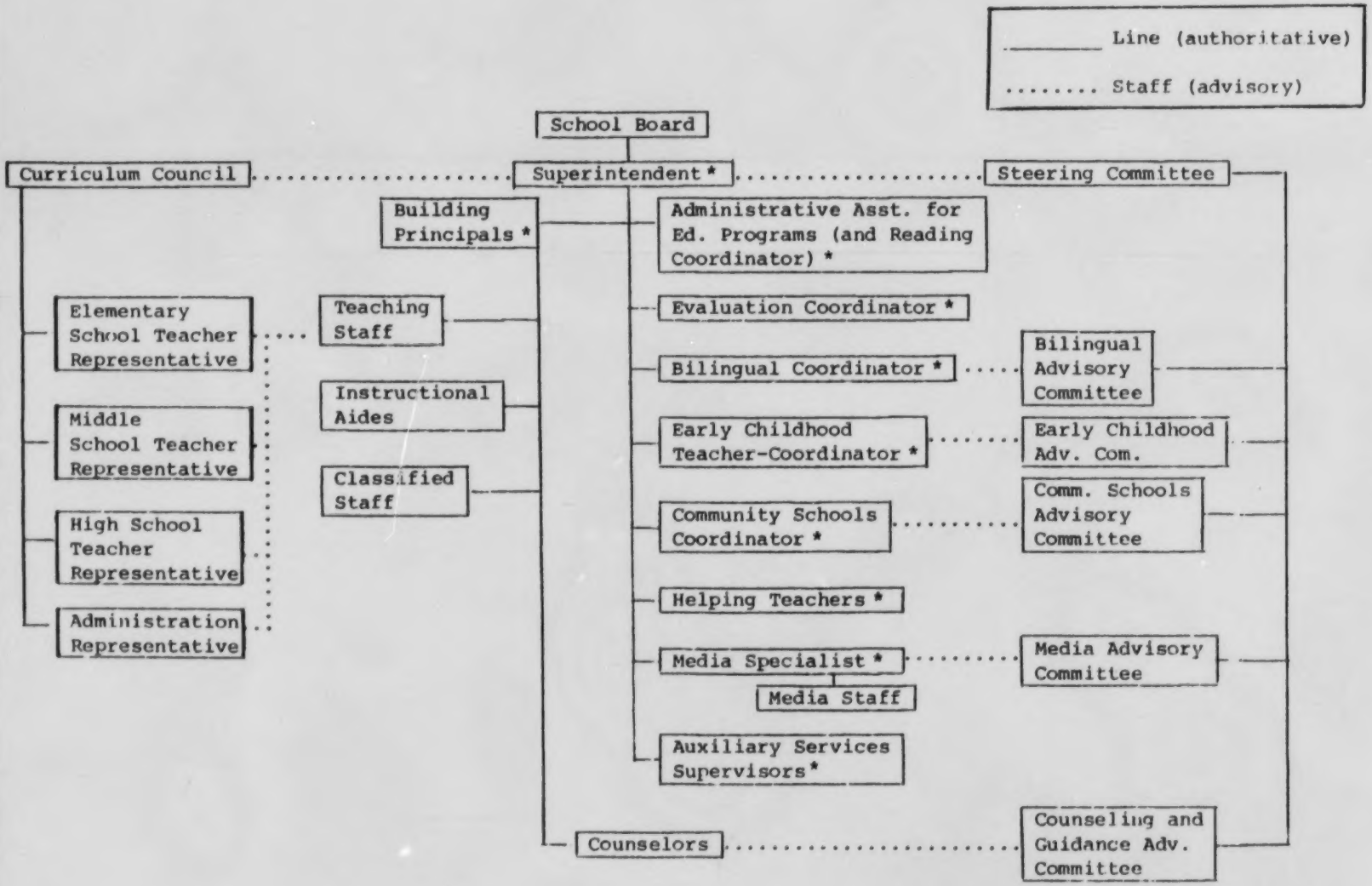

Figure 4-1. Willcox Public Schools organizational structure, October 1973

*District Administrative Staff

(Source: Willcox Public School records)

> The administrative positions outlined in the chart (Fig. 4-1) are all new with the exception of the superintendent and principals (Willcox Public Schools 1973a:71).

If the weekly administrative staff meetings were any indication, then indeed the project succeeded in diffusing the decision-making process. In addition to the principals and superintendent, the staff meetings included all of the Rural Schools staff, the head custodian, a county career education specialist, and a counselor. However, the meetings did not include any of the teaching staff, or any community residents. Each principal held regular staff meetings with the teachers. Because of this, the teaching staff saw the project as primarily an administrative project.

Administrative Realities: Room at the Top

At the very outset of the school year, one high school teacher voiced his reluctance to become involved with the project. He suggested that the changes due to occur as a result of the project were only those which administrators in the system saw fit to implement. As an alternative, he suggested that the money available to Willcox could be split evenly among the teaching staff for them to use as they needed. Although such a strategy sounded far-fetched at the time, it proved to be one which the county career education department used the following year. Nevertheless, the first changes in Willcox were from the top down.

With the increase in the numbers of people in administrative positions, the project in Willcox had the effect of changing the administrative structure from a simple, four-position organization with a distinction between administrators and teachers to a more complex organization which included the adoptive positions of "coordinators." Later in this chapter, the coordinator roles are examined in detail. But an understanding of the kind of administrative change that occurred can be illustrated by

looking at the position of "administrative assistant" in the project.

The Administrative Assistant: Evaluation and Compliance

The administrative assistant position was a key position in the project. The administrative assistant served as a surrogate project director, an evaluator of the component programs, and as a mediator between the district and the Experimental School program in Washington.

The position of administrative assistant was designed as a half-time position. The first person to hold the position also served as the reading coordinator for the project, and the second person began as a half-time counselor. But, as an important facet of the position was the correspondence that had to be undertaken between Willcox and Washington, the people who served as administrative assistants were selected for their abilities and background in dealing with federal funding agencies. Whereas the writing of proposals for federal reading, migrant and other program funds had been in the hands of the principals, the Rural Schools project created a position where all of these funding sources could be handled by one person. The administrative assistant became a proposal writer and a compliance officer. This elaboration of the role was signaled by a change in title from "administrative assistant for educational programs" the first year to "administrative assistant for federal programs" the second year.

The superintendent saw the hiring of the assistant as one of the most satisfying events of the preparation period.

Anthropologist: Are there events you look back on as being especially satisfying during these first few weeks?

Superintendent: Yes. The most satisfying moment was when I was able to hire a person to be the project coordinator. Things have really moved since then. The administrative assistant for educational programs is, in fact, the one who is really coordinating the project. Selecting her was most important to the project.

Although the superintendent was the titular head of the Rural Schools project, the responsibility for its operation rested with the administrative assistant. This person carried on with the writing requirements of the project by compiling the quarterly reports. These reports, as has been mentioned, can be seen as a continuation of the writing of the plan. The administrative assistant became the planner for the remainder of the project, and because this person handled budgets and corresponded with ES/Washington, the direction of the project rested on his or her shoulders. If, as the superintendent indicated, the project appeared to be a small school district within the Willcox school system, then the administrative assistant could be seen as its "superintendent."

However, the creation of this position in the system also made for a conflict between the goals of the Plan and the operation of the project. The Plan called for locally initiated evaluation of the project, evaluation which would provide information so the project could steer a successful course. The evaluation part of the Plan was set up similar to the other project components, and a coordinator was hired to be the evaluator for the system. But the evaluative power rested with the administrative assistant. This person controlled the project budget, and so requests for changes in component programs were sent to the administrative assistant's office. The assistant also regularly corresponded with ES/Washington, so information about which components in the project would be expanded or limited was controlled through his or her office.

Having the de facto evaluation functions of the project reside in the hands of the assistant resulted in the inability of the project's evaluation component to become a meaningful part of the school system. After the second coordinator for evaluation resigned during the first year of the project, a committee was formed to meet the formative evaluation requirements of the Plan. The committee continued to look to the administrative assistant for guidance and legitimization of their activities until the project was terminated at the end of the fourth year.

STAFF SELECTION: THE SUPERINTENDENT

Although the administrative assistant was considered by the superintendent to be crucial to the project, the selection of the new superintendent after the 1972-73 superintendent left Willcox to pursue his doctorate in education was even more important. The new superintendent had to be someone who would be a competent leader of the local system as well as someone who could implement the project. The project itself was in jeopardy when all of the principal planners plus many of the teachers who were in favor of the project resigned. The project had become associated with this group of people, and many people in the schools and community saw the project as something the superintendent "owned" and would take with him when he left Willcox. The steering committee chairman remarked that he would have been "very nervous" if he had been sitting in Washington watching what was happening in Willcox. Even though the federal government had a commitment to fund the Willcox project, the widespread resignations at the end of the planning year caused some ES/Washington officials to have second thoughts about the ability of Willcox to carry out the project.

The new superintendent had to fit into two systems. The school system needed a traditional leader or manager who was certified to be a superintendent in Arizona. ES/Washington needed an innovative leader of the Willcox project, someone who could quickly move the project from planning to operation. There were traditional superintendents who could fulfill the first need, and there were innovative educators who could fulfill the second, but there were few people who could do both. The way the superintendent was hired reflects these two influences. The school board sought the new superintendent through the traditional procedures of the state placement center for administrators, while the departing Rural Schools staff sought him based on personal contact. The middle school principal and the project documentor functioned as a local surrogate for the federal government. They were well versed in the needs of the project and knew what kind of a leader would be needed to work with Washington officials and the local community. The selection of the new superintendent set the pattern for future hiring in the school system during the time of the project: people hired for the project itself tended to be found through personal networks and people hired for regular school system positions were hired through professional networks and procedures. The project became filled with people brought in through the personal networks of the superintendents and administrative assistants, while traditional school positions were filled through placement services and advertisements in educational journals.

The school board in Willcox is an elected group of five residents of the district. At the time the new superintendent was hired the board consisted of two ranchers, a farmer, a lawyer, and the wife of a respected physician in the town. These people were all highly respected in the

community and represented a direct communication link between residents and the school administration. In a small community such as Willcox, most of the population has at least an acquaintance with some members of the board of education.[3] The board served as a means by which community residents could influence school decisions. It was much easier to approach one of the civic leaders on the board with a problem than to approach the school administration. The school board was made up of people who could be approached informally through ties of kinship, voluntary association membership, or friendship. School administrators tended to be short-term residents of the community and expected problems to be brought up under the formal conditions of an administrative office.

While the board served an important function for the local population, it was not equipped financially or professionally to carry out a search for a superintendent. The state university system set up a placement service to overcome this deficiency of local school boards. The usual procedure involved the school district's sending notice that the superintendent position was open. The list of administrative positions open in the state would then be published and made available to education departments, state offices of employment, and other outlets. An administrator wishing a particular post would send his or her resumé to the placement service. The service would then select the three candidates considered to be appropriate for a given school district and send their names to the local board. The local board normally would interview these top three candidates and choose from among them.

Although this procedure appeared mechanistic, it was not without personal features. The selection committee of the placement service was made up of representatives from education departments in the three state universities.

Educators who wanted positions made it a point to become friendly with at least one of the representatives on the placement board, which would assure them a personal recommendation for a job.

According to the middle school principal, one of the school board members called her after the resignation of the superintendent at the end of the 1972-73 school year. The principal had extensive personal and professional contacts with educators in the state. In fact, she had just been offered a position in the administration of the Phoenix school system for the next year. The president of the school board knew this and asked her to find someone who could manage the new federal project. The principal immediately thought of an acquaintance; she called him to urge him to apply for the job. She pointed out that the new federal project would allow him to try out many of the ideas he had espoused during the bilingual education workshop where they had met. It was he who became the new superintendent.

Thus, the new superintendent for Willcox was hired through this procedure which combined formal and informal search techniques. He had been an elementary school principal in Tucson and saw his career as a series of advances leading to a high administrative position in a large school district. In Gouldner's (1957) sense, he was cosmopolitan. He was more interested in moving up the career ladder of education than in remaining with any one particular school system. An early interview with him brought this out:

> Anthropologist: How do you see this job fitting in with what you were doing in Tucson?
>
> Superintendent: In Tucson the hierarchy of the system started with a job as a principal and from there moved to either a director or an associate superintendent. I kind of feel that I'm jumping those positions and going directly to superintendent by coming here.

> I could have stayed in Tucson, but I came here because I think the job here gives you the kind of background that is necessary to learn about all phases of educational administration.

The new superintendent had been the first choice of the placement service for the job in Willcox. He was also the school board's first choice. School board members considered him an experienced and confident administrator with a personal charm which would suit him well in Willcox.

The hiring of the superintendent through the agency of the placement service filled the school district's need for a new manager. But as the superintendent was selected to run the school system, he was also selected to run the new federal project. The National Institute of Education's role in his selection was perfunctory as it included only accepting him as the new project director after he visited with the Institute staff in Washington. The writers of the original Plan had felt a personal stake in the future of the project in Willcox after their many hours of work with it during the planning year. Because of this, they served as personal and logical extensions of the Institute during the hiring process.

Two things are important about the informal candidacy of the new superintendent. One was that he was relatively unknown to the project documentor and middle school principal. They had heard him deliver a talk at a bilingual workshop, but did not know him personally. The decision to alert him to the possibility of the position was based on this brief meeting. The quickness with which the superintendent was selected by the Rural Schools staff members later became a feature of the hiring procedure for project staff. The second important aspect of this informal candidacy was that the project was used as a magnet to draw the superintendent from his job in Tucson to the small community of Willcox. In this sense the

project, as symbolized by the Plan, continued to be used in an outward direction. It had first been used to draw federal funding into the community. Now it was being used to draw highly talented people into the community to direct spending of the federal money.

PERSONALISTIC LEADERSHIP IN THE SCHOOLS

The sociologist Max Weber (1947) distinguished among three types of political leadership: traditional, legalistic and charismatic. Traditional leadership relies on cultural rules of succession and kinship for the authority and power to affect public behavior. Legalistic leadership is based on a code of law or formal doctrine, and charismatic leadership depends on the personal qualities of an individual for power and authority (Weber 1947:358-8). Weber set the three types apart in order to talk about the qualities of political organization in the abstract; in reality people in leadership positions draw their power and authority from all of these spheres.

While any superintendent might wish to feel that he or she has traditional authority (that is, comes from a long line of leaders), legalistic authority (has been chosen by the school board) and charismatic authority (is considered to be endowed with extraordinary powers), different superintendents tend to emphasize one or two of these kinds of leadership. The new superintendent stressed what can be described as a personalistic, or in many teachers' words, charismatic approach to leading the school system. He took pride in his handsome appearance, his ability to appear calm and informal during periods of difficulty. At one staff meeting he described how he had thought often about becoming a politician, but had decided to stay with education instead. He recognized that people enjoyed working

with him for his personal qualities more than for his formal training or success in solving educational problems. A year after he had left the system, people in the schools continued to talk about him as an extraordinary leader.

> Anthropologist: Have you experienced any disappointments with your job?
>
> Early Childhood Coordinator: Well, not specifically with my job, no . . . But I was disappointed that I was not able to work with Don [the superintendent]. I knew of him before I came here, and to tell you the truth, I really took this job so that I could have a chance to work under him. He's a wonderful man, you know.
>
> * * *
>
> The Third Superintendent: I don't claim to be the best superintendent in the world, and I know I have a hard act to follow. From what people tell me around here, the last superintendent used to walk on water.

Although it is true that the new superintendent was hired by the school board and was in that sense a legalistic leader, much of his behavior reflected Weber's definition of charisma: "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities" (1947:358).

The emphasis on personal warmth and a relaxed attitude was in contrast to the leadership pattern developed by the previous superintendent. The new superintendent prided himself on greeting employees and students in the school by their first names. In contrast, the previous superintendent allowed only close friends and members of the administrative staff the privilege of calling him by his first name.

Immediately upon coming to Willcox, the new superintendent made several gestures aimed at encouraging communication between him and school

employees. For example, he opened the shades of the administration building. Such a gesture indicated to the teaching staff that his administration would be open, and was so remarked on by teachers. Another gesture in this same vein was the taking down of the federal and state flags which stood on each side of the superintendent's desk. The new superintendent stated that the flags were too formal for his style of work, and sent them to the library to be displayed there.

It should not be concluded that the new superintendent based his administrative style solely on his personal charm. But, because of the reports about the previous superintendent, he found it useful to create a contrast between his administration and that of his predecessor. This contrast was best portrayed as a difference between legalistic and charismatic leadership. Indeed, how much of this pattern emerged at the instigation of the new superintendent and how much of it was present in the expectations of the teaching staff is difficult to determine. To a large extent, the new superintendent appeared to emphasize the relaxed, friendly attitude that teachers expected with a new administration:

> Anthropologist: What was it like working here last year?
>
> Teacher: It was bad. Last year when that S.O.B. [the first superintendent] was here, I would come to school at the last possible moment and leave at 3:45 on the dot. It got so bad that I felt physically sick just being in the same school system as that bastard. This year, it's a different story. I don't know Don that well, but things are much better. I stay around now until 4:30, 5 o'clock most days.

The new superintendent used his personal charm to quiet down a school system which had undergone drastic changes. Not only did the district suddenly find that it had approximately 20% more money to operate with due to the Rural Schools project, it was also experiencing a rapid

turnover in administrative positions. Many people on the teaching staff as well as a sizable portion of the community felt exhilarated after forcing the previous superintendent to resign. Two out of three principals and 24% of the teaching staff of 71 resigned at the end of the planning year. These drastic changes in the system were unusual, as normal staff turnover seldom exceeded 10% a year. The new superintendent certainly did not want a repeat of the conflicts of the planning year. To that end, he made a special effort to be friendly with those people who had led the battle against the previous superintendent. By stressing openness and friendship, he was able to "defuse," as he put it, the volatile situation he found himself in as superintendent of the Willcox schools.

Such a strategy was not effective in all circumstances. The "low profile" that the new superintendent created for the Rural Schools project led several coordinators to later resent the relative secrecy that seemed to surround their programs. Heart-to-heart talks with conflicting parties did little to solve structural differences between the Rural Schools administrators and principals in the schools. As one administrator put it, "He thinks he can solve everything with a kiss and a pat on the back."

STAFF SELECTION: THE RURAL SCHOOLS STAFF

The new superintendent officially became the leader of the Willcox schools on July first. He knew he had the job by the fifteenth of June. In the middle of July he was to travel to Washington D.C. to meet with the staff of the Experimental Schools program to discuss the implementation of the Willcox project. Between June fifteenth and July fifteenth, a staff to carry out the project was brought together. Several of the features so far discussed coalesced in the hiring procedure used in selecting

the Rural Schools staff. The professional background of the superintendent had included working with several federal projects, so he was familiar with the demands that would be placed on a staff hired to carry out a large project:

> Superintendent: I think that if I hadn't had the experience I had with federal projects such as bilingual education, reading, media and early childhood that coming here could have been a disaster. While I was an elementary principal we had a large reading program in our school developed by [the person who became the reading coordinator and administrative assistant in Willcox]. I also worked as a media coordinator, and my wife is an early childhood specialist. The Willcox school system is quite different than Tucson, of course, but the principles that apply to education can apply to any of these schools.

Just as the superintendent was selected on the basis of a personal decision by the middle school principal and the project recorder, so too were the staff of the project. In contrast to the use of a personal network to bring together the project staff, the professional network of the state placement service was used to fill the two principal positions open in the system.

In order to use or activate the superintendent's personal network in such a way as to bring change agents into the school system, he relied on his personal charisma. Few of the coordinators hired realized what the Rural Schools project entailed. For most, the opportunity to work with the superintendent and the availability of federal funds to develop programs to their liking was enough to bring them to Willcox.

The Selection of Individual Coordinators

The six new positions created by the project were the media coordinator, early childhood coordinator, bilingual coordinator, a local evaluation coordinator, community/schools coordinator, and reading coordinator.

A seventh position, the administrative assistant position, was held by the reading coordinator. Of these six new positions, the bilingual coordinator position had been promised to the consultant who had designed the program the year before. The five people who were hired for the other positions indicated to me that they were mildly surprised at the speed with which the superintendent hired them. Not only were they hired within a short time, but they were often hired despite having little knowledge of the new positions they were to fill. In essence, the new superintendent asked them to trust him that the jobs would be suited to them and their interests. In three of the positions, the people hired had little background with the program to be implemented. Interviews with these three, the early childhood, local evaluation, and community schools coordinators, illustrated the sense of trust which the new superintendent engendered in people.

> Anthropologist: How did you hear about the position?
>
> Coordinator: I was referred to Don through the University of Arizona and the Tucson Office of Manpower. The director of the Office of Manpower was a personal friend of Don's and knew that he was looking for someone for the position in early childhood.
>
> Before I took the job, the thought of Willcox completely turned me off. I had been through here many times and it's not at all like home. But it was a challenge because the school system had contracted for five years with NIE which is a very new branch of OE. Very few people have been able to contract anything from NIE, especially in the Southwest.
>
> The first thing that turned me on to the job was Don. Just meeting him and finding out where his head was at and how he feels about education and then not really understanding what Rural Schools was about was enough so that I said, 'yes, I'm ready to go to work. I'm excited and really turned on. . .' So this is where my incentive came from.

The local evaluator position was filled by a person from Willcox. The position was originally funded as a half-time position, and the superintendent relied on the suggestion of the departing middle school principal that a teacher be appointed.

Anthropologist: How were you selected for the evaluator position?

Coordinator: I was teaching last year, but when my baby came, I decided I didn't want to teach full time. I talked with [the documentor] . . . she said that there may be a position for a half-time person in research. A few weeks later she called and said a consultant for evaluation was coming and asked if I wanted to be in on the very bottom of the organization. I said I would and met Don. I found out later that I could have the position.

Anthropologist: Were you then interviewed?

Coordinator: No, there was no official interview. I guess there was nobody else interested in the position. They weren't so much interested in my qualifications as in dedication to the Willcox school system.

The community schools coordinator was also a local resident, but was not an employee of the school system. His wife had been a teacher during the planning year, and was one of the informal "clique" of people who supported the previous superintendent and the Rural Schools planning. At the end of the planning year she quit the system and subsequently divorced her husband. It was he who became the community schools coordinator. Later during the year he used his own divorce as an example of the strains that were present during the end of the planning year between the pro-administration and anti-administration factions of the system. Thus the project cost him his wife, but provided him with a job. It is no wonder that he subsequently worked long hours with little time off in order to implement the community schools program; the project for him at least was a very powerful force in his life.

Anthropologist: How did you hear about the job?

Coordinator: I didn't. I applied and was interviewed for a teaching job, I thought. Apparently Don was interviewing for this position, and I really wasn't aware of it at the time. It came as quite a surprise, really.

Anthropologist: When you were offered this job, what interested you about it?

Coordinator: I have been indirectly associated with this program ever since it was initiated. Not directly, but I was aware of a lot of the things that were going on. As far as knowledge of the job itself, basically very little. I was just astounded I was selected.

Anthropologist: What were your personal goals in undertaking the job?

Coordinator: At the time they were hard to define. I was not really sure what the full impact of the job would be. Even now I haven't thought it out to the full potential. After we get the objectives written up, then I'll have a clearer concept of what my job entails. I think it's a fascinating one and one that I don't believe has been done in a rural school before. In order to get community involvement in the school and promote it is basically my job.

Two of the coordinators did have extensive backgrounds in the areas they were to work in. The media coordinator had been a media specialist at the University of Arizona, while the administrative assistant and reading coordinator had been a reading specialist in the Tucson school system. The hiring of the media specialist illustrates the quickness with which the new superintendent made decisions about the new staff.

Anthropologist: How did you hear about the job?

Coordinator: The superintendent and his wife were taking a class at the University of Arizona, one of my classes in media. After the session was over in July, he asked me to consider taking a job here in Willcox.

Anthropologist: So you met him for a period of a month or so.

Coordinator: No, not even that long--for a period of about two weeks. It was a condensed course, training for a follow-through program. I had heard about him and what he had been doing at his elementary school, though.

The new administrative assistant had worked with the superintendent in a Tucson elementary school. Again, it appears that the personal charm, the charisma for which the superintendent was known, was a strong factor in the decision to come to Willcox:

Anthropologist: Why did you take the job?

Coordinator: One Sunday night Don called me this summer and he told me he was the new superintendent in Willcox, and would I please come down and work with him as the person in charge of the Rural Schools project. He then told a little what the Rural Schools project was. I told him since I'd just completed redecorating the bedroom and all the plans we had for our home in Tucson that it would be impossible for us to move. Besides, my husband was teaching and we'd have to come together if we came. He said that was taken care of. He said, "Well, you think about it for a day or so and let me know." That happened the first of July. On the third of July my husband and I came over to Willcox to see what the place was like. . . . It was on the fourth of July when we decided we wanted to come to Willcox to live.

Anthropologist: What incentives were there for you to come here?

Coordinator: First of all, I knew Don well and had worked with him very closely for the last two years and I knew his philosophy of education. I knew that he was very interested in children developing learning. I saw that the Rural Schools Project was going to open things up for me very widely. I could come in and set up a program for reading throughout the entire curriculum.

In addition to the six positions which the superintendent filled for the project, two principals and a middle school counselor were hired through the regular hiring process of the district.

Because the six Rural Schools coordinators were brought into Willcox through the employment of the superintendent's personal network, they became his protégés in the eyes of the district staff. The Rural Schools

staff was seen by many as an imported cadre of experts.

Anthropologist: What do you think of the new superintendent?

Administrator: He will be superintendent of district one [Tucson] in five years, and he will take everyone he brought here with him.

The prediction turned out to be incorrect on both counts. First of all, the superintendent left after only one year to take a job with Tuscon district one, and second of all, the coordinators left the project of their own accord. No one was taken to Tucson.

DISCUSSION

The hiring process outlined here set the Rural Schools project off as a special change in the school system. The superintendent used two mechanisms for filling vacant positions in the project and in the school: quick face-to-face contacts and traditional placement procedures. The use of these two networks, one personal and the other organizational, mirrored the manner in which the superintendent himself was hired (see Table 4-2). The reason for relying on his personal network to fill the Rural Schools positions was in part that he needed to fill the positions quickly if the project was to be implemented in mid-August, a month and a half after he was hired. But aside from these practical concerns, the hiring procedure describes something of the structure of the project as a whole. The project was a new and strange entity to the school system, a program for changing education in Willcox from the top to the bottom.

The use of a personal network accomplished two things. First of all, it enabled the new superintendent to go to Washington during the summer knowing he had a complete staff to implement the project. This was important because the link between planning and implementation was not

Table 4-2. Previous Locations and Relationships Between Rural Schools Project Staff Members and New Superintendent

Rural Schools Project Position	Previous Position and Location	Relationship to New Superintendent
Bilingual Coordinator	Reading Specialist in Bowie, next town east of Willcox on Interstate 10.	Met superintendent in Willcox. Position promised during the planning year as a result of consultant work.
Early Childhood Coordinator	Bilingual Consultant, Tucson	Known to superintendent indirectly through friends in University and state agency.
Administrative Assistant and Reading Coordinator	Reading Specialist, Tucson	Well known to superintendent; worked in the same elementary school and on federal projects together.
Media Coordinator	Media Specialist, Tucson	Known slightly by superintendent; superintendent had taken a short-term media course from the specialist.
Local Evaluation Coordinator	Elementary teacher, Willcox	Unknown to superintendent. Position and person suggested by departing Middle School Principal and Project Recorder.
Community/Schools Coordinator	Elementary teacher in small school outside of the Willcox district; commuted from Willcox.	Unknown to superintendent. Applied for teaching job, but selected for community liaison work.

strong, and a lack of confidence in Willcox by federal officials could well have aborted the project. As it was, the quick hiring of the principal staff indicated that the new superintendent was working hard for the project and was willing to go to great lengths to gather an implementation staff. The second result of the personal network was the creation of a staff which was, for the most part, personally associated with the new superintendent. Most of the staff members stated at one time or another early in the year that they would not have come to Willcox had it not been for the superintendent.

This loyalty to the superintendent would take its toll on the project; but as the project began, the personal loyalty staff members felt to the superintendent was greater than that of any of them to the particular programs they were to implement. Because of this the demands made upon them during the first few months of implementation did not diminish their enthusiasm for the project, which remained high as long as the new superintendent supported and rewarded their loyalty. The self-sacrificing manner in which the staff carried out the difficult job of gaining entrée into the school system and community while designing and implementing their particular programs was such that it took on the character of almost religious devotion. Coordinators worked ten-hour days, went to civic meetings in the evenings, and on weekends did the paperwork associated with the project, all with little complaint.

Eric Hoffer (1951) has characterized this kind of person as a "true believer." Although Smith and Keith (1971:99) point out that schools and other bureaucracies seldom generate such strong sentiment, innovative projects within them often do. The development of this "true belief" spirit which manifests itself in the dedication change agents bring to a

project is in part due to the circumstances in which such people find themselves. The Rural Schools project was not a popular part of the Willcox public schools as the 1973-74 school year began. Teachers considered it at best someone else's federal project; at worst it was a reminder of an unpopular administration. Under these circumstances, the new project staff found themselves facing a passive and possibly antagonistic school staff. One response to this situation was to "close ranks" and develop a flurry of activity within the confines of the project. The project under these circumstances had characteristics of a "crusade." The leader of the crusade was the superintendent to whom the Rural Schools staff owed their loyalties, as was indicated by this statement made during the first month of school in 1973:

> Anthropologist: How do you think the project is going right now?
>
> Coordinator: For me, it's going very well. But I really think that there are teachers within the school who really don't understand the Rural Schools project and who really need it explained to them. Without the support of the people who are not directly involved, we can be hurt, I feel. . . . The fact that other teachers have been turned off by us has bothered me. Are we going to get cooperation or not from these people? My only hope is that I have so much faith in Don. I don't know him that well; I feel that I know him: he's a good "people" person, and he knows how to keep things cohesive. . . . I feel I can trust him.
>
> Look at the staff: I think we have a fantastic group of people on the staff. It's like Don said, we're all quality, and I really believe that and there's a lot of potential.

The way different people were hired and the extent of their relationship to the new superintendent (see Table 4-2) set the stage for the support they were to receive as the year began. The filling of the Rural Schools positions represents the "coming to life" of the project; now there were people to personify the plans and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

CHAPTER FIVE. THE PROJECT IN THE SCHOOLS: MAKING A PLACE FOR CHANGE

When school teachers and students returned to classes in August of 1973, they found a new, dynamic superintendent, two new principals, and six Rural Schools project staff members. In addition, five bilingual aides and several reading aides were brought into the schools. Some teachers erroneously believed that the project would not be implemented because of the administrative turnover at the end of the previous school year. Most of the elementary school teachers had taken part in the first training session of the Rural Schools project, a week-long introduction to cultural sensitivity led by the bilingual coordinator and the early childhood specialist. High school teachers were surprised to find that the room they had used as a lounge and work room in the library was now the bailiwick of the media coordinator.

In general the Rural Schools project staff were new to the community, new to their jobs, and new to the school buildings where they worked. As they began the difficult job of integrating themselves into the social life of the schools and community, they found that their first priority for the year was to revise the Plan so that it would reflect their own interests and hopes for the project. This chapter examines how the coordinators adapted to the school system in the context of a major change

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in relationship between the Willcox school district and the National Institute of Education.

THE SUPERINTENDENT GOES TO WASHINGTON: A CHANGE IN RELATIONS

In early July of 1973 an event took place which was important to the history of the project, although it was not reported in the Quarterly Report for Willcox. This was the trip to Washington by the new superintendent and a school board member. Activities such as this trip were not usually put in the Quarterly Reports for several reasons. For one thing, the Experimental Schools program had continuously stressed that the projects were to be locally defined and implemented, and communication with other Experimental Schools sites or other non-local entities was not encouraged. Because of this, the Reports gave the impression that the "rural" Experimental Schools sites were operating in isolation, with little influence from regional or national events or people, even though such contacts are regular and integral to public schooling in any context in the United States. A further reason why the trip was not entered into the Report was that it did not directly pertain to the implementation of the specific components of the project in Willcox, but rather was concerned with relationships between Willcox and the federal Experimental Schools program. Only after implementation began in earnest did evidence of this relationship enter into the Reports.

The relationship between Willcox and ES/Washington changed emphasis as a result of this first meeting. In the previous chapter, it was noted that the Willcox Rural Schools staff of the planning year saw the federal Experimental Schools staff as colleagues, equal partners in the exciting prospect of comprehensive change in schools.

During the period of preparation for implementation, this relationship changed to one of "patron-client" exchanges (Foster 1967:217). ES/ Washington became regarded as a powerful and somewhat capricious patron who held ideological and fiscal power over the Willcox educators. The Washington meeting signified this change in relationship. The ES/ Washington staff began seeking ways to insure that Willcox would carry out the contract. To this end, the relationship shifted from friendly partnership to veiled antagonism. Willcox Rural Schools staff members began talking about the "demands of Washington," indicating that the relationship was now perceived as imbalanced, rather than as a collegial attempt to make education better.

In any social relationship, some form of reciprocity is a major component of how people act towards one another. Sahlins (1965) distinguished between two kinds of reciprocal relationships: those which are general and those which are balanced. General reciprocity exists where the parties involved do not take close account of what is given and what is received; people understand a general responsibility to pay back in goods, services, or assistance that which has been given them. Balanced reciprocity, on the other hand, involves a more precise reckoning, as Sahlins (1965:148) points out:

> Balanced reciprocity is less "personal" than generalized reciprocity. From our own vantage point, it is "more economic." The parties confront each other as distinct economic and social interests. The material side of the transaction is at least as critical as the social: there is more or less precise reckoning, as things given must be covered within some short time.

Both kinds of reciprocity characterized the project as it moved from planning to implementation. At first, the planning year was carried out under an attitude of mutual trust and respect. Communication between

Willcox and Washington was informal, and excerpts from the log of the planning year indicate that the consultants, project officers, and other people on the Experimental Schools program staff were seen as having the same goals and excitement about educational change as the Rural Schools staff in Willcox.

By the time of the Washington meeting, the federal consultant who had been highly supportive of the Willcox planning process had left. In a month the federal project officer was to be replaced. The demands from the Experimental Schools program staff became more time specific and legalistic, in keeping with the shift from grant to contract status of the project. Willcox became indebted to the federal government, and this symbolic indebtedness could only be repaid by trading specific materials. One item on the agenda of the Washington meeting was the "Scope of Work" portion of the Willcox contract (National Institute of Education 1973). It is illustrative of the shift to balanced reciprocity between the two agencies:

> 1. The budget which was revised on May 9 will become part of this contract.
>
> 2. The project must submit a written plan for each of the following program areas by the dates indicated prior to spending funds for them. The NIE Office of Contracts and Grants will have to approve the plans before these funds can be spent:
>
> a) a detailed plan for evaluation of the project must be submitted no later than August 30, 1973. . . .
>
> b) Detailed descriptions of functions and plans for implementation must be received for the following no later than 30 days prior to the date the district intends to <u>begin</u> expending funds for equipment, materials and supplies:
>
> 1. Adult education courses
> 2. Recreational program
> 3. Summer Activity program
> 4. Fine Arts
> 5. Environmental Education

Another item on the agenda for the Washington meeting was a review of the Willcox Plan. As if to demonstrate the kind of authority that was to become part of the normal relationship between the federal government and the Willcox project, the new superintendent was to review the original plan and write an extensive critique of it before he left the capital. He was able to carry out this task by working well into the night, and later used the incident to illustrate two things: one, that Washington could and would make difficult demands on the project; and two, that he as superintendent was capable of handling these kinds of demands.

The critique of the plan which was written by the superintendent and sent to Washington later in the month, as well as the subsequent re-writing of the entire Plan by the new staff, can be seen as a device for transferring the ownership of the project to the new administration. Because of this task the superintendent and project staff became personally and professionally involved with the ideas the Plan contained. In this way the Plan lost some of the character of the previous administration and writers, and took on that of the new staff.

In summary, the first Washington meeting of July can be understood as a major turning point in the life history of the project. It marked the change in project status from grant to contract, from design to implementation, and from external direction to internal direction. The relationship between Willcox and Washington changed from colleague to patron-client, and the exchanges between the two parties took on a more balanced than general character. The meeting also symbolized the change in ownership of the project from one local regime to another.

THE COORDINATORS' LOT: DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO MAKING A PLACE IN WILLCOX

The discussion so far has centered around the local project in Willcox and its relationship with the Experimental Schools program in Washington, D.C. In mid-August of 1973, the project began actual implementation; school was starting for the 1500 students of the Willcox system, and the new people hired to implement the project had to find a place for themselves. The project in effect created six new positions in the formal organization of the Willcox school district. One part of the project, a component for "administration and governance," was designed to incorporate these positions into the system. But as school began, the coordinators found that the new superintendent was far too busy with finding his own place as chief administrator in the system to help the Rural Schools staff find theirs. The Plan which appeared so thorough and comprehensive in fact did not tell the new coordinators what to do. As one coordinator put it, he was hired to do a job which was described in two paragraphs of the plan.

> Anthropologist: Do you see any definite disadvantages to the Rural Schools project?
>
> Coordinator: Yes. . . . The public school personnel haven't been really informed about what's going on. You can't expect them to work with you if they don't know what you're doing; and if you don't know what you're doing, you can't tell them!

Given little direction from the new superintendent who let everyone "do his own thing" and sink or swim, the coordinators gravitated toward the kinds of activities they were familiar with in their previous roles. The administrative assistant, who was to become the de facto project director, was also the reading coordinator. It was in keeping with her background that she concentrated most of her energies in the

latter area, rather than trying to provide leadership to the project and possibly intruding on the domain of the new superintendent. Although the project had a "central office" of its own, the project staff quickly moved to establish individual domains in each school. For example, the media specialist set up his office in the media center which served the middle and high school. Even after three years of implementation, he remained in that library facility and never ventured to develop media facilities in the elementary school. Because these physical domains were set up, each school began to experience a different emphasis of the project. High school teachers responded to my queries about their involvement in the project by saying that the project was an elementary school program. The real conesiveness of the project existed only in the weekly administrative staff meetings where each administrator and coordinator relayed information about his or her program and school to the rest of the administrative staff.

Although the project was designed according to the "components" of educational change, such as "the use of time, space and facilities," "curriculum," and so forth, each with several programs within it, in reality the project became the reflection of the group of coordinators hired to run it. Each coordinator had a program to run, and these "programs" soon came to be regarded as the real "components" of the project. Thus, the "official" organization of the project as it appeared in the Plan differed from the organization of the project as it appeared to the Rural Schools staff as implementation began (see Fig. 5-1).

What happened was that a select number of the programs of the original plan became the components of the project as it began implementation. But because the Plan was in existence, there was some ambiguity over whether a given coordinator was in charge of a component or a program.

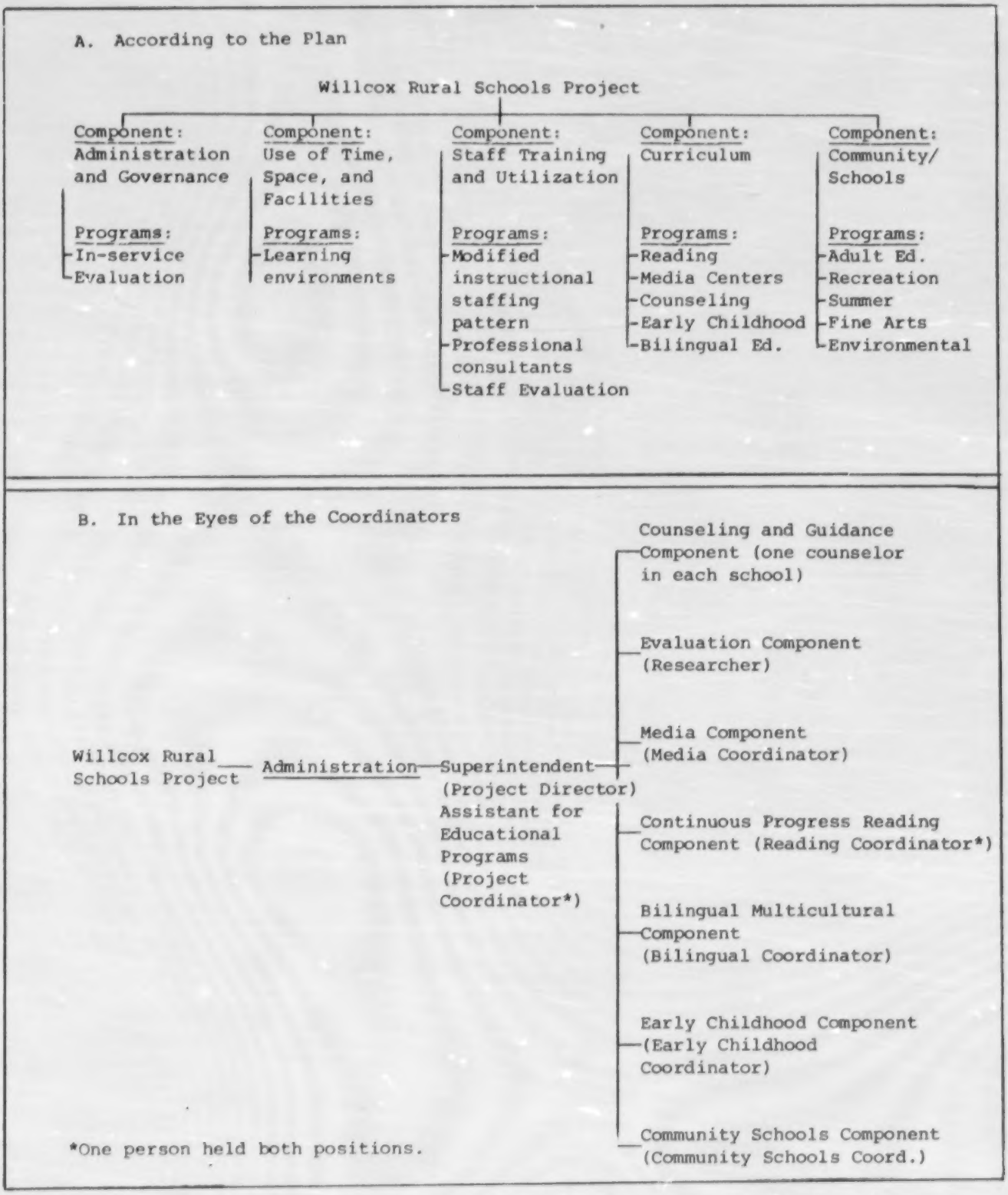

Figure 5-1. A schematic representation of the Project according to the plan and in the eyes of the coordinators

Components were higher on the informal scale of prestige than programs, and so most coordinators stated in the interviews I conducted with them early in the year that they were component coordinators. Indeed, the addition to the Plan which provides the design for project evaluation begins, "Evaluation is an official component of the Rural Schools Project" (Willcox Public Schools 1973a:74). The ambiguity over what the project was made up of continued throughout its implementation. The Plan was never reproduced and distributed in the schools, although a 15-paragraph summary was provided in the middle of the second year. Teachers involved with the components could only rarely name more than one or two things that the project did, although they were usually familiar with the personnel who worked with the project. The confusion about the basic nature of the project persisted well into the third year. For example, the chairman of the evaluation committee which had been set up to review the project asked me as a non-participating member what the components of the project were. This ignorance was not only due to a lack of internal communication about what was happening in the schools, but also to a high degree of staff turnover that the project experienced. Even as the project began, the positions of the coordinators were not clear, and this ambiguity continued as the project evolved. The coordinators experienced difficulty in fitting themselves into the project even as they did fitting into the schools.

The conception or model of the project which evolved after the coordinators were hired was not an artifact of chance, however. The positions had been negotiated between Willcox and Washington and constituted the end result of the interplay of these two entities. The form of the project as seen by the coordinators is very similar to that provided to Willcox in the Scope of Work document (National Institute of Education 1973:1-2).

While all sections of the plan are mutually reinforcing and therefore equally important, the following indicate the major thrusts of the plan.

1) An early childhood program for 3-4 year olds, partially staffed by student tutors and supported by parent volunteer contacts in the homes.

2) A bilingual program with a dual focus, first, development of language skills in Spanish and English, and second, an emphasis on the positive values of Mexican-American culture.

3) Curriculum articulation and integration in light of project goals, beginning with a focus on continuous progress reading.

4) Development of media centers supplied with a variety of catalogued learning materials which will be significant extensions of the classroom environment.

5) Counseling and guidance programs which will provide individual and small group counseling for students. . . .

6) Development of a community-school partnership which encourages community members to take an active part in school programs. . . .

7) Implementation of staffing patterns and training to encourage teachers and administrators to set goals and develop skills. . . .

The coordinator positions were specifically developed to provide services in the school system which were not being provided either by teachers or administrators. The exception to this pattern was the counselor positions. The project called for a counseling and guidance component which would facilitate expanding the number of counselors in the district from two to three. Little change in the way counselors dealt with students or other adults in the system was called for in the plan. Parent study groups had already been instituted during the planning year, and the plans for adult counseling of the teachers and administrators did not materialize. The coordinators faced a more profound problem, that of how to create a

totally new way of running a school district. The positions carried a salary schedule which was in line with traditional administrative posts in the district, and because of this, many teachers assumed that the new project staff were administrators. But the requirements of the positions involved such things as teaching very young children, as in the case of the early childhood component, or working with students from all three schools, as in the media component. As it was, the coordinators gravitated to the kinds of tasks that characterized either teachers or administrators. The following excerpts from the first Quarterly Report indicate the early activities of the coordinators.

> The Early Childhood Coordinator has assisted the Bilingual Coordinator in an inservice workshop held for bilingual aides and teachers. She has also assisted the Bilingual Coordinator in teaching (team teaching) and a child development course. . . .
>
> The Bilingual-Multicultural Coordinator conducted a workshop, August 13-17, for the bilingual teachers and aides.
>
> Facets of the Bilingual-Multicultural Program that have been implemented are:
> - The Miami Linguistics Reading-Language Development Program. . . .
> - Ethnographic study of children and teachers is nearing completion. . . .
>
> The Continuous Progress Reading component got underway through a two week Reading Workshop, July 30 - August 10, for teachers and aides. This was planned and conducted by the Administrative Assistant for Educational Programs.
>
> The teachers and their aides, to this date, have administered 480 individual informal reading inventories. . . . A diagnostic reading folder has been set up for each child.
>
> The Administrative Assistant has interviewed and hired twenty-three aides, and has set up, with the cooperation of teachers, the daily schedule for each aide. . . .
>
> The Media Specialist. . . .
> - Arranged and scheduled media classes
> - Set up a video tape format and student training to televise sport activities

- Contacted, through the Community-Schools Coordinator, the cable television company to provide the school system with cablecasting capabilities

The Community-Schools Director. . . .

- Made arrangements with the editor of the Arizona Range News to print all Community-Schools articles and photographs as needed.
- Made arrangements through the State Department of Education, Adult Education Division for an Adult Education Program.

[Activities of] the Local Evaluator. . . .

- Organizing available research material and ordering needed books
- Reading and outlining pertinent material in the evaluation area
- Writing a model for evaluation which is presently being refined for deadline date of October 20, 1973
- Designing instruments for data collecting.

From these and other observed activities a pattern emerged early in the year: coordinators emphasized either teaching or administration. The early childhood coordinator looked upon her position as a teaching job, both in terms of the three- and four-year olds in her class and the high school tutors who were responsible to her.

Anthropologist: Why did you leave your previous job?

Coordinator: I could never see myself becoming an administrator. I really am a child-oriented person. I like children. I like being close to kids; and I like to feel that I'm a part of a community too. It's important to me to feel that I'm a part of someone's life.

Along with the early childhood coordinator, the media specialist emphasized the teaching alternative in the position, and began scheduling classes for middle and high school students in media as soon as school started. Like the early childhood teacher, the media specialist had a classroom in which to work. The specialist noted that the chance to become a teacher was one of the motivating factors in his decision to leave a University staff position.

Some coordinators adapted their jobs so they could work with children.

Other coordinators adapted their jobs so they could work as administrators.

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> Coming to Willcox as a media specialist didn't sound very exciting. I really don't know why I took this job. I think that way deep inside of me I wanted to teach students. I was going to give up all this glamor and making executive decisions with higher people, deans and department heads. I was giving this all up just to get back into the classroom. I felt that I had been cheating myself and that the students were really where it is. I thought I would be a better father if I worked in the school district and knew the organization and I could see some of the problems that schools have had and how they relate to my own children.

In contrast with these two coordinators who saw teaching students as the primary responsibility of their jobs, the other coordinators stressed the managerial aspects of the positions. The reading coordinator conducted a two-week workshop on diagnostic testing and prescriptive correction of reading deficiencies, initiated a reading test which was given by teachers and aides to all elementary students, and hired the aides for the project. The bilingual coordinator likewise organized a pre-service workshop. Although he was assisted by the early childhood coordinator, it is important to note that he took credit for the planning while she helped with the "teaching" part of the workshop. The bilingual coordinator developed other administrative activities such as testing the elementary students with several reading tests, and surveyed the teachers to see how they felt about Mexican American children and individualized instruction. The community schools coordinator saw the holding of community meetings as his place in the project, and became the official liaison between the school system and the formal association of residents referred to as the civic community in Chapter Two. To this end, he attended a daily businessman's coffee hour, made contacts with the newspaper and radio station, and traveled to various meetings in the county to discuss possible classes in adult education.

Creating new positions in the school system was an almost insurmountable task. While the new people could be referred to as coordinators and labeled as members of the Rural Schools staff, in fact, the strategies each person developed reflected either teacher or administrator tendencies. Teachers dealt with students; administrators dealt with adults. Teachers gave tests to children in their classrooms; administrators told them what tests to give. This was especially noticeable in the elementary school. During the first three months of the project, the following tests were given to elementary pupils at the request of the coordinators:

Northwestern Syntax Screening Test
Criterion Reference Test
Miami Linguistic Readers Placement Test
Informal Reading Inventory
Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Reading
Stanford Third Grade Reading Test--third grade only

The bilingual multicultural coordinator was responsible for three of these six different testing programs which were carried out in the elementary school between August and October of 1973. The coordinator rationalized the tests in terms of developing knowledge about language levels for the project, but none of the tests had any sections for bilingual students. The program of testing which this coordinator launched is more in keeping with a program of reading, and in fact, the coordinator for the bilingual component had been involved in federal reading programs prior to coming to Willcox. In other words, the coordinator was following in the pattern of being a reading specialist even as he was employed to institute a program of bilingual education. He even began teaching a demonstration class in reading.

The way in which the bilingual coordinator tried to mold the component into his previous experience and interests caused some predictable conflict between him and the reading coordinator, who was also attempting to institute a reading program. By the end of September the elementary school had become a symbolic battleground with each coordinator attempting to win over the teaching staff to his way of teaching reading. On October fifth the bilingual coordinator resigned. In the administrative staff meeting which followed his resignation, the new superintendent admonished the administrative staff to "be professional" in their dealings with each other and teachers; he noted at the time that such conflicts should be kept within the confines of the administrative staff and not expanded to the teaching staff.

THE PROJECT AT THE END OF THE FIRST QUARTER

The resignation of the bilingual coordinator came at the very end of the first quarter of the project's implementation in the schools. As September ended, a month and a half of school had gone by, and the project had developed a sense of order. The initial contacts between coordinators and the rest of the school system had not proved as difficult as the "outsiders" had imagined; thirty-two pages of behavioral objectives had been sent off to Washington in return for money to begin several of the components, and the new and old principals in the system reported in the weekly staff meetings that everything seemed to be going along well in the schools.

A review of the components as they appeared at the end of September illustrates a crucial point about the project as a whole, which was to influence its implementation through all of the changes of the following

quarters: namely, the beginnings of the limitations in scope and activities of each of the components. Although the project was conceived on paper as being a "comprehensive" alternative to traditional schooling in Willcox, a change force which would affect all classrooms, all age groups and all parts of the schools' formal organization, in fact it began as a series of semi-independent programs. As time passed, this independence gave way to isolation. By the end of the first year the coordinators complained at the last official staff meeting that the thing they needed most was communication with each other. They started the year hoping for more communication between themselves and the rest of the school staff.

Anthropologist: Do you see any major disadvantages at this time?

Coordinator: The only thing that might break down is the communication, the understanding. If the communication level is kept up and people do get involved, I don't see any limitation to this program. . . . It's a matter of communication and getting the information out. It's a little hard for some of them to assimilate this, but it will have to be done.

Early Childhood

The early childhood program presents itself as a good example of the evolution of autonomy and isolation in the project. According to the Plan, the program was to serve three- and four-year olds, teach student tutors from the middle and high school who would learn about child development, and make use of home visitations in order to involve parents and other community residents in preschool education. Before the school year started, ES/Washington suggested to Willcox that a large van was available for use with the program. Thus a fourth component, a traveling classroom, was added to the preschool program. In short, the program was to be wide in scope and comprehensive in its services to the community.

Before school began, however, the need to write the behavioral objectives postponed the start of the early childhood classes until October first. Between August and October first, however, over 60 parents had registered their children for preschool. The superintendent then made the first limiting decision: only four-year olds could be accommodated. This still did not leave the coordinator with a manageable number of pupils, as she would be teaching in one of the elementary rooms which comfortably held from twenty to thirty students. The superintendent then made a second decision, this one limiting the area from which children in the program would come: he suggested that only those children within the city limits of Willcox or whose parents could transport them to the school be admitted to the program. Of course, with the prospect of the "classroom on wheels," those children living on farms and ranches would theoretically have access to the program eventually. As it turned out, however, the van did not arrive until the second year, and after a year of one-day-a-week service to a few children, the van was given over to the media program. The limitation to within-town residents seemed to cause little harm, although residents in the outlying areas resented the town/country split in the program. Some of this resentment came out in the open at the beginning of the third year of implementation when a group of country residents demanded that their children be admitted to the program. One rancher called me on the telephone to inquire about the governing structure of the project so that he would know where to apply pressure. As reported in my field notes,

> [a rancher] called me last night. He first asked me to explain the project: "Isn't this Rural Schools Program supposed to be for rural people? How come my kid can't be in the early childhood program? Here we are way out here where the kids have no one to play with all day and then they can't even get in a

> program to help them be prepared for school. Where can I go to get this straightened out?" He asked where the funds came from, who was in charge of the program locally and in Washington, who was on the school board. He later explained that a "herd" of people out in the country were getting fed up with the way things were being run. "There isn't anyone who can't have his tail twisted." It will be interesting to see how they do with this complaint and compare their success or failure with what's been going on with the bilingual program.

Even before the early childhood program began holding classes, then, the children of farm laborers, ranchers, and other country dwellers had been excluded.

The program was to later drop the idea of home visits, as teaching the two sections of twenty children each as well as planning a program in which the coordinator had no background proved far more exhausting then expected. The use of tutors from other schools also became limited. Before the class started, a very large number of high school students signed up for the course in "child development." The class attracted a majority of Mexican American students (13 of the 18 students enrolled) as it was one of two classes in the high school curriculum which were taught by Mexican Americans. Both classes were sponsored by the Rural Schools project.

So even as the project began implementation, a movement towards the isolation of the early childhood program was in evidence. Such a trend continued until, by the second and third year of implementation, the early childhood program became understood as a teaching program; an administrator stated to me that it could be run by an aide, as it did not even require a certified staff member as a teacher.

Bilingual-Multicultural Education

The bilingual program was first implemented in the elementary school. The original Plan called for a bilingual aide to be assigned to one class at each grade level in the elementary school, but the overwhelming response of teachers and parents to the program resulted in an expansion of the program to two classes per grade level, except in the fourth grade where all four classes were to have a bilingual aide. Unfortunately, however, no new aides were hired beyond the original five, so the program became isolated in time. Each aide was assigned to several teachers, the result being that children were exposed to the program for an average of thirty minutes a day. Because of the short time the aides could work with each teacher, the superintendent told the aides and teachers that the aides would only teach Spanish and not help with other curriculum areas. Thus the program from its start also became isolated into one content area, Spanish language instruction (see Burns 1975b).

Reading

The reading program involved both the elementary and middle schools. The reading coordinator, who was also the administrative assistant or project coordinator, was able to work effectively with a majority of both the elementary and middle school staff in workshops and weekly "information meetings" she held. Because her office was in the middle school, and because of the conflict between her and the bilingual coordinator referred to earlier, however, the middle school became the prime target for her activities. The experience which this coordinator brought with her, coupled with the fact that she was also the *de facto* coordinator

for the project, led to her success in procuring high-interest reading materials, carrying out a complete individual testing program of all elementary students, and developing the idea of a "diagnostic" approach to reading problems in the two schools.

Counseling and Guidance

The major addition to the Willcox schools that the Counseling and Guidance component brought was an opportunity to hire a third counselor. The district had maintained two counselors, one for the high school and another for the elementary and middle schools, for several years. Soon after school started, a counselor was hired for the middle school, though not full time. Half of his salary came from other federal sources, and he was required to direct reading and migrant programs. The project did not affect the content of counseling in Willcox, as this was determined by the personal style of each counselor. The counselors stated quite candidly that the component was written in a way which left them free to continue what they were doing.

During the first months of school the three counselors were brought together to review the project Plan, but beyond this there was little communication among them. The new counselor hired with Rural Schools funds came into the district after the Plan had been rewritten, and felt no particular professional stake in the activities it outlined.

By the middle of the second year of project implementation the counseling program in the schools had reverted to a form it had before the project arrived. Two counselors served the school population, and had little to do with general project affairs except for writing quarterly summaries of their counseling activities to be placed in the project's Quarterly Report.

Media Centers

As the media program began, the coordinator explored several of the alternatives he would develop over the next several years. The media specialist began by holding classes for both middle and high school students in design, photography, television, and graphics. Although his rationale for holding classes was to train students to run the equipment in the district, his personal motivation was his desire to be a teacher. The classroom area he began working in was a portion of the library complex which had previously been used as a teacher's lounge. This infringement on what had become the territory of the high school faculty strained the relations between the coordinator and the high school staff, but the fact that he was teaching a course to which the "problem" or difficult-to-discipline students could be sent helped resolve this conflict. An aspect of this incipient conflict was that the lounge was only the "unofficial" meeting place for teachers; the school had a regular lounge. Because of this, and the fact that the principal of the high school was new himself, the existence of the other lounge was unknown to the coordinator at the time he usurped it. Just as writers on education have found that there are "invisible curricula" in school systems, so too are there "invisible domains," geographic areas defined not by regulation, but by social structure. No conflict arose, because the coordinator began teaching classes. Since the coordinator made his position into a teaching job, the difference between himself and the administration became greater than the difference between himself and the regular teaching staff. Hence, the issue of the lounge did not necessitate negotiation between the two groups.

Indeed, the media specialist seemed to be testing out the limits to which membership in the "teacher moiety" (Wolcott 1977) would

benefit him. In addition to the lounge incident, the coordinator made the further mistake of using a darkroom which had been set up by a social science teacher who was the faculty advisor to the yearbook of the school. The faculty member quietly took his darkroom equipment from the media center, to the surprise of the coordinator, who had assumed the equipment belonged to the school, not one of its employees. Again, after a period of cooling off, the incident lost its import, and both incidents later became a portion of the high school faculty's "folklore" about the insensitivities of new teachers to the world of the high school faculty.

The incidents did have one long-term effect, however. During the second year of implementation the coordinator reorganized the media portion of the library so that a room was available for use as an informal faculty lounge. There he placed a coffee machine, a refrigerator, and tables and chairs. The lounge was quickly taken over by the teachers' union for their informal gatherings, which caused the superintendent to jokingly rename it the "AFT lounge."

A surprising feature of the Willcox schools at the time the media program began was the amount of videotape equipment that was already in the district's possession. The specialist remarked that the equipment was at least as good and extensive as that available at the University of Arizona. Most of the equipment had been purchased in previous years with other federal funds.

By the time the first school board meeting was held in early September, the media specialist had converted a room of the library into a television studio. The cable television company in Willcox had made arrangements to hook the school into the system, and so Willcox Public Television came into existence as a part of the Rural Schools project.

Although the media program began implementation with a flurry of activity during the first quarter, it is important to note that it too began to be isolated in the district. First of all, the media specialist became located in the Media Center, the combination library and audiovisual storehouse for the middle and high schools. He planned to later expand his operation to include the elementary school, but was unable to do so. Even within the media center, the program became limited to graphics and television media, and did not expand to include the library program. The media program became restricted to the rear portion of the building, the front portion being reserved for the librarian who had long been associated with the Willcox system. The library remained his domain.

The original Plan also called for the library to become more accessible to community residents. This was to be done by opening up the facilities two nights a week. Because of the geographic boundaries between the media specialist and the librarian, the facility did not become available for community residents. The librarian did not feel it was his responsibility to return to the school in the evenings to open the library, and so when the media specialist opened the center up, he did so to do his own work in the rear of the building. The front library portion was open, but remained unlit and unattended. The few times that community residents came to the library in the evenings, they had to ask for assistance to turn on the lights. Before long the evening hours of the library were discontinued for lack of community interest.

Community/Schools

The community schools component of the project faced a dilemma. On the one hand, the Plan called for increased community involvement in the

schools through adult education classes, use of facilities by community groups, and use of the community as a classroom. As it turned out, these things were taking place before the project was implemented. Cochise College, the county community college for the area, was already holding classes in Willcox, and a high school teacher had served as the organizer of each semester's offerings. Community or "city league" basketball had traditionally used the high school gym, the PTA had traditionally used the cafeteria, and the high school counselor opened the high school gym on weekends for the public to use equipment, play basketball and work out. Environmental education was also taking place, although not under that name. The biology teacher in the high school had developed the idea of sampling plots in the fields behind the school where students would randomly select a three-foot by three-foot plot to do a life-form population count. The nearby national monument was also used by the science department in the high school for field trips as well as by the high school counselor for field trips in a psychology course he taught. Added to these uses of the environment as a classroom were the field trips the agriculture teacher took his class on to the nearby farms, and the numerous short field trips to local gardens, grocery stores and the like that the elementary school students took as a regular part of their classes. The high school also had a "work study" program whereby students received credit for working with local businessmen on an apprenticeship basis.

In the face of this existing network of community-school interchanges, the coordinator for that component undertook the task of formalizing the network. One strategy he used to do this was the calling of public meetings. Meetings were held with National Park Service employees, and with representatives from the various civic clubs in town and from nearby

retirement communities. These meetings served the function of "sanctifying" the activities already occurring in the district, such as the work study program or the field trips to the national monument. The coordinator also attended meetings in town as the representative of the Rural Schools project. Early in the first quarter I attended a meeting with the coordinator at the county seat, eighty miles from Willcox. The meeting was held at the county school superintendent's offices, and included representatives of several career education programs, as well as representatives from the State Department of Economic Security, an umbrella agency which handles unemployment, veterans' programs, and some welfare programs. After the meeting was over, I asked the coordinator what he had gotten out of it. He stated that the meeting was important because it helped publicize the Rural Schools project and also gave him a "contact" in the Department of Economic Security which he might find useful later.

A second strategy which the coordinator used to formalize the activities already going on in the school system was to serve as the school's liaison with the local news media. The coordinator began writing articles for the local newspaper, talked to the radio station owner about resuming a weekly program to discuss school activities, and contacted the cable television company for the media specialist.

In addition to these activities aimed at legitimizing the position of a community-school coordinator in the district, the coordinator began planning for a much expanded list of adult education courses in the district. He began with courses for the General Equivalency Diploma (GED), and subsequently was able to have Willcox declared an official testing site for GED tests. Based on discussions with people in the town, he also attempted to institute

a class on citizenship and one on English as a second language. The citizenship class was unable to become a reality because those adults who enrolled did not have a sufficient command of English to understand the instructor.

Classes in Spanish and English as second languages ran into problems when the bilingual coordinator who was to teach them resigned at the end of the first quarter. The community/schools coordinator had difficulty in finding someone to teach these courses, and after several weeks persuaded a Spanish teacher from another school district to teach them. Enrollment in these classes dropped drastically. The people who had enrolled in the Spanish class, for example, were local business people, ranchers, and police officers. They all wanted a working knowledge of conversational Spanish which they could apply to their jobs. But because of the uncertainty of the class and the emphasis on grammatical fundamentals, most of the class did not complete the course.

A Review of the Project at the End of the First Quarter

By the end of the first quarter, then, the project had settled into the pattern that was to persist throughout its existence. Each school experienced the project differently. The elementary school was most influenced by the project, as the bilingual program, the early childhood program, and the reading program all affected the students of the early grades. The middle school housed the project headquarters, and was influenced by the reading program and by the media program as the media specialist had one class of middle school teachers. The high school had the services of the media specialist, and, at least for the first semester of the school year, had a child development class taught

by the early childhood coordinator. Very few teachers had any idea of the totality of the project or what it was attempting to do. Significantly lacking in the first quarter was any attempt, such as a district-wide meeting, to explain the project. This too was a problem which was to haunt the project throughout its history. In part this initial lack of information about the project was precipitated by the changeover in administrative staff between the planning year and the first implementation year. But the secrecy which surrounded the project had a basis in the relationship of Willcox to Washington as well. The new superintendent wanted to have the project well in hand and the necessary changes approved by ES/Washington before he began publicizing what was happening.

> Superintendent: Everything about Rural Schools can't be brought out yet because things aren't firmed out. In fact the objectives have just barely been completed. For us to begin a saturation of what Rural Schools is to the general public and to the rest of the staff without ourselves knowing the objectives is foolish because we'd have to come back and say, 'well, what we said wasn't really true; now this is the real truth.' I think they have an idea of it, general knowledge, but I don't think the student population, the teachers, the community are as well informed as they could be.

> Anthropologist: What directions would you take to inform them?

> Superintendent: Well, starting off, we're going to use all the media that's available. We have a TV channel, we're going to give talks to civic groups. We're setting up a tape and slide presentation that will be available to all groups in the community, classrooms here in the school, and teachers' organizations, plus we're going to have orientation sessions for each of the schools.

In actuality, the available media were not used. As mentioned, the Plan was never made public; the project did hold an inservice meeting at which each component was explained, but this did not take place until late February 1974. The slide presentation remained a topic of discussion

at most of the administrative staff meetings of the first year, and was brought up again during the second year when a new superintendent arrived. Late in the second year of the project the media specialist compiled a group of slides taken of his class and their activities. These slides were shown to several civic organizations as an example of the media program. This was the only outcome of the planned media presentation of the project to the community.

DISCUSSION

The development of the project from a time of planning to a time of action took place during a period that constituted the "first steps" of the young project, a time of exploration and rapid growth. Like a small child beginning to walk, the project aroused a lot of attention in Willcox. With the hiring of the new superintendent and the staff to run the project, this offspring of Willcox and Washington took on a new character. The new superintendent moved quickly to staff the project. The hiring of the six coordinators gave a form to the project which was different from the original concepts of the Plan. The quick hiring of the staff changed the project from reliance on a model which included components and programs to a model where each person was in charge of a separate "component." These new components included some of the programs of the Plan, such as bilingual-multicultural education as well as some of the official components, such as community/schools partnership. Some aspects of the Plan were significantly toned down or held in abeyance. Staff training and utilization, including teacher self-appraisal, for example, was not instituted or "personalized" through the employment of a coordinator to work with that component. The superintendent deliberately

chose to emphasize those programs of the project which were self-contained and not threatening to the school staff. In this way the schools would not feel that they were being forced to accept a change which they knew little about and associated with a previous regime.

While the project did not begin with an emphasis on affecting the entire school staff and community, it was not looked upon with disfavor in all quarters. The project still represented a prestigious achievement for the school system, and served as an effective mechanism for bringing people and money into the community. An article in the Arizona Range News (May 19, 1973) underlined this fact and argued that the project should be viewed as an asset to the school system. The article stated that the Rural Schools project

> reflected the ideas and goals of [the board of education and the school administration]. It did not reflect criticism of the school system or its personnel.
>
> We should not let misunderstandings develop which may tend to interfere, instead of complement the work being done to improve the educational opportunities of all people in the community.

With the new school year, people in the schools and in the community were willing to give the project a chance to prove itself. Residents came to "advisory committee" meetings and learned about the new people who were to work with each component. Teachers got to know the new staff, and aside from some resentment over the high beginning wages paid to these people, accepted those coordinators who entered the world of teaching.

As the project took these first steps, it found that it could not do all of the things that had been planned. While it is instructive to view the project during this period of preparation and beginning implementation as a time of great excitement and exploration, it is important to keep in view the early results of this exploration. The project moved

from a comprehensive Plan for changing education at all levels in all schools and in the community, to a less holistic series of "components" aimed at steadily shrinking targets in the schools and community of Willcox. The key concept that summarizes this movement in the project is isolation. Each component became isolated in one, or at the most, two schools of the district. Coordination between components was limited, except in the case of the bilingual and early childhood components. Each component became limited to specific groups of students. The early childhood program took only a select number of four-year-olds from within the City of Willcox. The bilingual program was limited to the elementary school, and to 15 minutes of Spanish language instruction to children in many of the elementary classrooms. Community/school partnership became isolated to residents most active in the association of people described earlier as the civic community--those people involved in the network of voluntary associations of the town. Where residents had become involved in school administration through the committee structure of the planning year, the implementation of the program saw them relegated to a different role--recipients of school services. Residents became the students for the adult education classes. For some, this was an opportunity to gain needed knowledge to receive a General Equivalency Diploma. For others, however, it was reminiscent of the years they had spent in the schools as students.

How did this isolation of the project come about? The answer lies in the complex interplay of local and non-local features of the project. The new superintendent was quite aware of the resentment many people in the schools had about the project. The rewriting he did of the Plan focused on editing out the language which was offensive to teachers. For the most part, these changes in wording were aimed at taking the

compliance that teachers were expected to exhibit out of the project and replacing it with opportunities for involvement. The perceived resistance to the project in the schools also affected the components which were implemented. The superintendent and coordinators kept the project from being publicized, and limited each component's activities to specific parts of the schools. In this way the project could start small, and work out into the rest of the schools. Just the fact that the entire project staff and much of the administration were new to Willcox added to the isolation of the project. The project had kept a log during the planning year which charted its progress, but this log was not consulted by the coordinators. They distrusted such a document as it was written by one of the people no longer with the schools. The picture which the new people had of Willcox and the project was constructed out of the off-hand comments and warnings that they received from school people. Such a picture of antagonism and resentment was sure to limit their attempts to implement a holistic project.

The staff of the Experimental Schools program of the National Institute of Education was also responsible for the isolation of the project. The Scope of Work document required that the new coordinators write behavioral objectives and rewrite the Plan before their salaries would be paid. With such incentives the new project staff spent most of the month of September writing pages of behavioral objectives. Consultants were called in, different formats for writing were described, and meetings of the Rural Schools staff were held on almost a daily basis in order to meet these requirements. The new coordinators saw this task as a necessary onus of a federal project. They did not feel that the objectives they were writing would be useful in carrying out their programs, but rather that they were a part of a negotiated

"trade-off" with ES/Washington. The result was that the objectives were turned in at the end of September and subsequently accepted by ES/Washington. The only comment that the Willcox people heard about them was that they were too long. This comment by the project officer from ES/Washington infuriated the superintendent and Rural Schools staff, as they felt that the long hours spent in completing the task had been wasted.

This interorganizational activity surrounding the rewriting of the Plan and the writing of behavioral objectives took valuable time away from the project. Instead of becoming a part of the schools and community, this task succeeded in further molding the staff into a unit, and so added to the isolation of the project.

The isolation of the project should not be viewed as a predetermined result of an overly ambitious project. It happened because of the change-over in staff, the view of the project and the school system that the new people had as they began implementation, and the interorganizational activity between Willcox and ES/Washington. Although the project's isolation can be viewed as a negative feature, it did allow the coordinators to concentrate on specific areas of change.

CHAPTER SIX. FOUR YEARS OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The decisions, events, and activities of the project during the first three years of implementation commanded a position of interest and importance in the schools and community. The first year, from the beginning of the second quarter of project implementation to the following summer, corresponds to a stage of "youth" in the project's life. This first stage is characterized by an atmosphere of excitement, some confusion, and a feeling that the educational innovations could be as comprehensive in real life as they were on paper. In May of the first year the project was dramatically set back when the energetic superintendent who brought the project into action resigned in order to take an administrative post in Tucson. The second and third years were quiet ones for the project. During this time the project matured. Many of the components became routine and thus indistinguishable from the daily operation of the school district. The second and third years were presided over by a superintendent/ project director who was interested in careful school district management as contrasted with imaginative exploration. By the middle of the third year, the project began to slow down, and staff members lost much of their enthusiasm. School and community people recognized that federal support would not last forever. Project personnel began to look for other jobs: the

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Director sought out a small superintendency in a distant district, a secretary became certified in special education in order to adapt to the newest fad overtaking public education in the state. During the fourth year, the project went into forced retirement. Newer and younger programs such as "Right to Read," "Title VII Bilingual Education," and a "Return to Basics" vied for the positions that the old project components held in the social structure of the schools. Five years after a letter of interest had been written from Willcox to Washington and the project had been conceived, it died a quiet death (see Table 6-1).

The Quarterly Reports of the project functioned as extensions of the original Plan. The Reports gave some cohesion to the project by forcing Willcox educators to describe what was happening on a total project level once every three months. They thus limited some of the centrifugal forces in each building and grade level which tended to pull the project and reduce it to a series of semi-autonomous activities. The Reports also can be seen as the building blocks of the official project public image, the facade. The building of the facade itself provided a task and a reminder to the project staff that there were some extra-local responsibilities that came with the federal support. The facade was also used to provide Washington officials with a picture of the project as a smooth-running operation being carried out by competent professionals. The problem that plagued Willcox, however, was that it was not always evident that anyone was reading the Reports. The task of writing them was deemed highly important by the administrative assistants (it was one of the basic duties of their jobs), yet the Reports were seldom commented on by project officers or other officials at ES/Washington. One administrative assistant once remarked that he was

Table 6-1. A Chronology of the Rural Schools Project During the Implementation Years

Date	Major Event
Nov. 1973	First evaluation coordinator resigns, ES/Washington project director visits Willcox.
Dec. 1973	Second evaluation coordinator hired.
Feb. 1974	Project staff hold in-service day for teachers to explain the project. ES/Washington project officer visits Willcox.
March 1974	Second bilingual coordinator hired.
May 1974	Second superintendent and early childhood coordinator resign.
June 1974	Third superintendent hired. Administrative assistant and reading specialist becomes elementary principal. Elementary principal becomes business manager.
July 1974	New superintendent travels to Washington and feels he is humiliated by agency officials. Second bilingual coordinator resigns.
August 1974	Second evaluation coordinator resigns. New half-time administrative assistant and elementary counselor hired. ES/Washington project officer visits Willcox.
Nov. 1974	Middle school principal resigns to take teaching position and lead evaluation committee of project. Middle school counselor becomes principal.
Jan. 1975	New elementary school counselor hired. Administrative assistant becomes full-time.
July 1975	Third bilingual coordinator hired.
Oct. 1975	Administrative assistant and superintendent travel to Washington to negotiate final two years of project. Administrative assistant begins to look for superintendent job.
Jan. 1976	Continual loss of pay vouchers for project causes disillusionment with ES/Washington. Administrative assistant writes to congressman for help.
April 1976	Administrative assistant travels to Washington to complete final contract negotiations.
May 1976	Second early childhood coordinator leaves district.
June 1976	Administrative assistant resigns, community schools coordinator position is dropped from project.
Dec. 1976	Superintendent decides to drop bilingual component from project.
Jan. 1977	Superintendent and school board decide to end project at end of current school year.

glad that I was keeping the Quarterly Reports in my files and reading them; he said that he and I were probably the only people who read them.

A YEAR OF HOPE AND FRUSTRATION

The Quarterly Reports do give a good image of how the project saw itself during the three years of implementation. During the first year the Reports were written by the administrative assistant and reading program coordinator. The following excerpts indicate both her hope for a successful project and the disappointments of watching many of the staff of the project resign during the year.

> Mr. Hal O'Toole, Bilingual-multicultural coordinator, submitted his resignation on October 5. The position has not been filled at this time. The Rural Schools secretary, Marjorie Conner, submitted her resignation as of October 26. The Researcher, Mrs. Glenda Fischer resigned from Rural Schools Staff on November 26. Mrs. Jane Summer has filled the vacancy and began work on December 10. . . .
>
> The Rural Schools Staff met many times for the purpose of revising objectives for each component and making necessary revisions in the Rural School's Plan. . . .
>
> The words butter, milk, churn, cream, salt and water were presented in Spanish to the kindergarten children. . . . They then made butter in a churn and spread it on corn bread. . . . This activity was video taped by a media class of students. . . . The first graders took a vicarious vacation to Mexico.
>
> A paperback book fair sponsored by two eighth grade teachers had been scheduled for the week of December 10-14. Due to delay in shipment of the books, the fair has been rescheduled for January 14-18.

In mid-January of the first year the project had already experienced the resignation of the bilingual coordinator, the project secretary, and the evaluation coordinator. The ES/Washington project officer had alienated the superintendent by failing to make a firm

acceptance of the Plan. The new evaluation coordinator produced numerous flow charts, evaluation schemes, and addenda to the Plan to justify her position. The early-childhood coordinator had made it known that she was disillusioned with the project and hoped to get out of administration to find a teaching job. The superintendent was still commuting between Tucson and Willcox so that his wife could continue her career in that city. The only sphere of the project that seemed to be having success was the media program. The media specialist had become a whirlwind of activity, giving classes to middle and high school students, producing television shows that were sent out on the local cable channel, taking care of the audio-visual stock of the school, helping teachers with photographs and other visual aides, and designing curriculum in graphics. He had turned the new but seldom-used library into a meeting place for students and teachers. In addition to his technical expertise, the fact that he was the only Chicano on the high school staff meant that he became a role model for many Mexican American students in the school. Although he did not wear his ethnicity as a badge, he was sensitive enough to interethnic relations to cosponsor the high school Spanish club. Later in the year he brought a Tucson mariachi band to the community through the sponsorship of the Spanish Club.

In contrast to the media specialist's enthusiasm and activity, the project as a comprehensive program lacked direction and purpose. Some of the isolation that began in the first months of the year continued: the office for the project became partitioned off into small cubicles at the request of the administrative assistant. She thought that the open room with desks scattered throughout led to too much visiting between project staff and made individual work difficult.

Project Implementation as Seen Through an Inservice Day

As a part of the contracted changes in the school system, the school day at the high school had been shortened so that teachers could spend a half hour to forty-five minutes each day working on project business. This time quickly became filled with teacher-initiated activities early in the year because the project staff was too busy rewriting the Plan to take advantage of this implementation strategy. A second strategy to involve teachers in the project was the use of "inservice days," days during the year when students were not required to be in school and teachers could work to improve school organization. In January the ES/Washington project officer for Willcox announced that he would be coming for a "site visit" in February. The superintendent saw his visit and the scheduled inservice day as a chance to redirect project energies and interest. The ES/Washington official's visit would serve as sufficient motivation for the project staff to reaffirm their commitment, and the inservice day would be an excellent vehicle for presenting the total project and introducing new project personnel to the school employees. The inservice day would further function as a means for convincing ES/Washington that the Willcox project was really doing something.

Although the date for holding the inservice (February 18) was set when the calendar for the school year was made up in August, it was not until January that the form of the event began to take shape. In mid-January the superintendent requested that all coordinators should hold "committee meetings" with the citizens and in this way implement the aspect of "community participation" according to the Plan. The committees for most of the components had already been disbanded because there were few functions that they could serve as the project coordinators went about

their day-to-day business. At this same meeting, the superintendent announced that the ES/Washington project officer wanted the final project Plan by the end of the month; even though the project had begun to be implemented several months earlier, the plan for implementation had still not been approved by ES/Washington. The superintendent had recently hired an evaluation coordinator and considered this move to be sufficiently important to satisfy the "demands of Washington" for a while. But the project officer continued to insist that a bilingual coordinator be hired. The superintendent considered this to be interference. He judged it politically wise to move slowly in bilingual education, as he believed many residents were hostile to bilingual education. The superintendent was Chicano, and several teachers repeated a rumor that he planned to release all non-Spanish speaking faculty. Such a move would have resulted in the release of the entire staff except for three people brought in by the project. In addition to these issues that affected the superintendent's position as leader of the school district, he felt that the five Mexican American aides that were hired through the project were doing an adequate job of introducing Spanish in the lower elementary grades.

On February 4, the superintendent announced to the group of administrators, coordinators, counselors, and secretaries who attended the weekly staff meetings that the inservice day would be devoted to the Rural Schools project. He then scheduled a meeting for the project staff on the next day, February 5. He began the meeting by announcing that the ES project officer was scheduled to be in Willcox for the inservice day along with two other members of the Washington staff. These other two people would help Willcox with the budget for the project. The superintendent suggested that a well-planned agenda for the inservice day would

allow things to function smoothly, and the staff responded accordingly. Field notes of that staff meeting illustrate his style of leadership and ideas about the inservice day:

> Don [the superintendent] began the meeting by saying that the staff would plan the inservice day in a way that allowed for evaluation. He then asked what the goal should be.
>
> The administrative assistant said, "We should explain Rural Schools, and establish just what evaluation is, for the teachers."
>
> Don said, "O.K., then this is our goal: to update and review the Rural Schools Plan for instructional personnel with emphasis on research and evaluation."
>
> The evaluation coordinator asked what part NIE people would play in it. Don said that if they could help, fine, but if they were just going to bullshit and not prepare themselves, then they could just sit as observers.
>
> Don said the day would start with an orientation where he would welcome the teachers. The project officer could explain NIE, and then Don would give a slide show of where we are now.
>
> The media specialist wondered if he could get the slides ready on time. He said he would do it if people would tell him what kind of pictures they needed. Don said he would work on a script after the school board meeting tonight. He then suggested that after the orientation the teachers could split into groups of 20 and have a 'county fair' arrangement where they would go to different places to learn about the project.
>
> The media specialist asked what the components were. Don answered, "Well, we have evaluation, curriculum, which contains reading, bilingual, early childhood, media, counseling and guidance, then we have community schools, staff training and utilization, and administrative organization."
>
> At this point there was some confusion over what was a component and what was a program until someone produced the Plan and came up with a list. Media, for instance, was a program, to the specialist's surprise; he thought it was a component.
>
> The metaphor that gained prominence in the later part of the meeting was that of a school. The day would be broken down into periods of 45 minutes each with a 10-minute break between periods. The periods were assigned numbers and each group of teachers would be considered a "class." The evaluation coordinator jokingly said that we could divide the teachers into "red birds," "black birds," and so on.
>
> Don closed the meeting by stating that he expected an outline and rehearsal from everybody in one week.
>
> After the meeting Don privately said that he was very upset with the way the project was going. He had asked a steering committee member to come to the inservice and she

refused because she had to babysit. Don took this as an insult to the importance of the project. He also expressed his disappointment with the NIE project officer and said that the school board was ready to break the contract and get out of the project.

A week later, on February 11th, the plan for the inservice day was complete. The superintendent predicted that over 30 community people would be coming as well as several members of the school board. All classified (that is, non-teaching) employees of the district were also required to attend. The evaluation coordinator had prepared a preliminary survey which she planned to use to find out the effectiveness and impact of the day on the participants. Labels announcing the name of each person in the district were provided by one of the banks in town.

As Tuesday, February 18 approached, the project staff worked nights and weekends preparing for their presentations. The project secretary complained that she had spent four hours Sunday afternoon working on two transparencies. Such commitment was expected of all who worked on the project during the first year.

The inservice day began on Tuesday with some disappointment. None of the school board members could get away from their jobs for the day and no other community members showed up for the drama. The project officer came from Washington by himself. As the teachers filed into the school auditorium they joked among themselves about whether attendance would be taken. It was said that in years past one of the principals got up with his clipboard and made sure none of the teachers left during the day. One teacher suggested tags were a subtle way that the administration had devised to determine attendance.

This initial joking illustrates that the teachers were well aware of the metaphor that was in operation during the inservice day: they were taking on the role of "students" in the school and the project

staff were taking on the role of "teachers." In fact, several teachers did leave during the day. After the administrative assistant mentioned this to the superintendent, he said that he would talk to each of them.

The inservice day began with all employees in the school auditorium. The superintendent welcomed the group, explained that attendance was not being taken but they were expected to follow the schedule that each person had received. The superintendent then apologized for the lack of teacher input into the Rural Schools project and explained that this inservice day marked the beginning of their real involvement. He then introduced the project officer from ES/Washington who sketched the history of the National Institute of Education and stressed that the Institute was created to "bridge the gap between practice and research in education." He asked the teachers to think of themselves as "researchers" in the experiment and suggested that the individualizing of instruction that they were carrying out was most important to the success of the program. Few teachers thought of themselves as carrying out "individualized" teaching, and those that did had not known that individualized instruction was a part of the project. Although the teachers politely applauded this speech, their confusion was summed up later when one asked, "What was he talking about?"

After describing staff development and the more democratic decision making structure he planned to institute, the superintendent ended his introductory remarks. He asked for questions but there were none. The teachers were expected to understand a complex project they had never seen on paper. They applauded the superintendent and were eager to break into the small groups and get some coffee. Several reported that they were

almost put to sleep during this first session. In his closing statement, the superintendent told the teachers and aides that "you are going to be like students today and see what we have in the classes for you." At this point the administrative assistant said there would be a 15-minute break until the first period was to begin.

Ideally, each group of school employees was to consist of 28 or 29 people. In addition many community residents, steering committee members and others had been asked to attend the inservice. Formal announcements were not sent out, nor were announcements made in the newspaper, but the superintendent relied on personal requests and telephone calls to steering committee members. The fact that none showed up was disappointing, especially when the project officer from Washington was observing the day. The groups averaged 22 or 23 members during the morning and after lunch dwindled to an average of 17.

One group began with a session on Evaluation and was held in a classroom of the middle school. On the way over to the session one teacher joked that there would be an exam at the end of the day on what the superintendent and project officer had said in the opening lecture. The group filed into the classroom and sat in the small desks that normally held sixth graders. The evaluation coordinator began the session with a lecture on distinguishing between research and evaluation in schools:

> Research is directed at finding the best possible environment for learning. Researchers try to find many alternatives for learning in schools. Evaluation is concerned with the criteria for judging the impact of programs on individuals. Here in the Rural Schools project, I run the Research Department. My job is to determine (1) can a particular activity be used, (2) is it practical in terms of time and cost, (3) is it acceptable to all parties, in other words, yourselves, (4) which activity achieves the purpose, and (5) how many activities can realistically be put into action.

The superintendent and ES/Washington project officer came into the session about fifteen minutes after it had begun. The evaluation coordinator was very nervous during the presentation and had focused her attention on the Rural Schools secretary during her lecture, one of the few familiar faces in the room. When the two came in, she focused her gaze on the project officer. When the coordinator asked for questions, several hands went up. The questions were difficult. The coordinator managed to avoid most of them by giving answers to questions that were not asked:

Teacher: How can you establish the validity of research instruments?

Jane: We in the Research Department are looking at the programs that the Rural Schools project has. These include reading, bilingual education, media...

Teacher: Have you though of evaluating grade promotion practices and the idea of grade levels that we have here in Willcox?

Jane: We are looking for each child in the schools to progress. The major goal of the project is to help the children become more responsible for their own education...

Teacher: The science students in my classes in the high school are in the upper quarter percentile in the tests I give them. Why doesn't the Junior High test these kids and find out what they need in science?

Jane: Can I meet with you later and talk about this? I think it is time to end this session. Isn't that right?

The coordinator had been looking at the ES/Washington project officer during this exchange. Faced with this appeal for a way out of the presentation, the project officer nodded and the session ended. By the time the group walked around the corner of the building to a counselor's room to hear about the community schools program and counseling, its membership had declined by four.

The second session of the morning was a combined presentation by two programs of the project, the community-schools and counseling programs. The community-schools program was successful in that it had generated interest in classes such as belly dancing and high school equivalency diploma. However, the coordinator was not held in high regard by the faculty, the downtown business group, or the administrative assistant. Counseling was indeed a component of the project, but the activities and objectives of the counseling component were indistinguishable from the regular counseling program of the school.

At the lunch break from 11:45 until 1:15 a group of high school teachers who formed one of the "cliques" in the system met to have lunch at a downtown cafe. There they joked among themselves about the skill of the coordinators as teachers and remarked that the day was more interesting than many previous inservice days in that at least the people giving the presentations were local. Too often inservice days were led by outside consultants who were perceived to have had little to offer the Willcox system.

The first afternoon session was also a combined presentation of two programs of the project: early childhood and bilingual education. The early childhood coordinator was well skilled at making presentations of this type through her early experience as a consultant with the National Education Association. She explained the goals of early childhood education and strategies for achieving these goals: "The children will develop social responsibility. In the classroom we do this by making sure each child is responsible for cleaning up after each activity."

She also pointed out that the program was designed to be "activity oriented," that it would prepare children for reading and mathematics, and

that it would instill in the children an "enjoyment for learning" through an emphasis on "discipline without tyranny." She then handed out a pamphlet on the program and showed slides of different activities that the children had engaged in, especially a Christmas party. In closing she noted that although there were only 40 students in the program, the van that was forthcoming from ES/Washington would allow the program to serve over 100 children in the school district.

The bilingual aides presented a short description of that program as they understood it. They had brought many materials such as charts, worksheets and displays that they had produced with them and proudly showed the group how the Spanish words for different colors, numbers, and other items were being introduced in each grade. At the end of this short presentation one aide told the group,

> We just want to tell you how important this program is. It has provided jobs for many of us, jobs that are really needed in this town because many of us are in poverty. But more important than that, we think this program in bilingual education is important for a community like Willcox in the Southwest. Spanish is a second language here and everyone should learn to feel comfortable using it. Knowing another language can help you throughout your lives. The lessons we give in Spanish also help the children learn English because a knowledge of Spanish helps them see how to pronounce English words properly.

The teachers were genuinely impressed and surprised at the professional approach of the bilingual aides. Teachers in the middle and high school had heard through their spouses or friends that these aides were actually teaching in the classrooms. This was not looked upon with favor by many teachers as several of the aides did not have high school diplomas and so their use as teachers lowered the status of being a teacher in the community. But the aides showed that, even though their program had been without leadership for the past five months (the elementary

principal had no background in Spanish or bilingual education), they were working hard to make this attempt at cultural and linguistic sensitivity in the schools work.

Following the early childhood-bilingual session, the group of 17 school employees left the library and walked to another classroom to hear the administrative assistant discuss the reading program. The administrative assistant had been a reading specialist in Tucson and the project in Willcox was an opportunity for her to try out her ideas on diagnostic testing, ability grouping, and the use of "high interest" reading materials in a large-scale program. Her presentation reflected her obvious expertise in the area as she carefully outlined the need for and implications of a reading program tailored to each child through the use of individual reading tests. The only difficulty in the presentation came when the high school English teachers asked why there was no mention of the high school in the plans for improving reading in the Willcox schools.

The administrative assistant replied that it was difficult to do anything for children at that level; they had already developed bad reading habits early in school. That was why the reading program would concentrate on the elementary grades. One teacher suggested that students who couldn't read should not be allowed to enter high school.

In contrast to the other sessions, the last session of the day in the library offered the employees a chance to walk around, investigate equipment and work with each other. The media specialist set up the media presentation with the help of eight middle school students who taught the group how to run TV cameras, work a Special Effects Generator, and produce a five-minute television show. The teachers and secretaries who still remained in the group (17 out of the original 22) enjoyed the session

Teachers learned how to operate videotape equipment in the media center.

The bilingual aides were expected to implement the bilingual-multicultural education program after the coordinator resigned.

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immensely and talked among themselves about the interest they could generate in their classes if they used the media equipment.

The inservice day ended at 3:50 for the employees. The Rural Schools staff met briefly in the office and congratulated each other on a successful day. "We sure learned what it is like to be teachers," one said, "I'd hate to go through that every day." She and a consultant from the Albuquerque school system went off and worked on the evaluation component plan. The other coordinators returned to their desks and classrooms and cleaned up the residue of the day. The ES project officer and the superintendent had a private meeting about the need for a bilingual coordinator until about five o'clock when the superintendent's secretary called the Rural Schools office and said that the staff was invited down to one of the nicer bars in town for a drink. Excitement and camaraderie were high as the staff reviewed the day. The superintendent brought two of the janitors from the school with him. In this way, the ES project officer was able to see the incorporation of the Mexican American community into the project that was presumably one of its characteristics.

The Aftermath of the Inservice Day

The next day the growing feud between the superintendent and the ES/Washington project officer burst into the open with an argument over the evaluation plan. The project officer thought it was too general and did not relate to the project or the schools. For the superintnedent, this was the final interference that he could stand from Washington. After a brief exchange of words, the project officer walked out of the office, and left Willcox.

For several weeks after the inservice day, the Rural Schools staff formally and informally evaluated their performance. The evaluation

coordinator sent around a questionnaire and found that about 20% of the 51 teachers who responded felt that the project was not successful while 52% felt that the project was meeting its objectives. The programs of "curriculum," "reading," "staff training," "administration," and "evaluation" were all considered very important by most teachers. Media, counseling, and community schools were considered fairly important, and bilingual education was rated lowest in importance. A high school shop teacher summed up many opinions about the bilingual program when he asked, "What good does bilingual education do me when I'm trying to teach a kid to use a wrench. Should I teach them how they use wrenches in Mexico?"

For one brief day the project presented a united front to an audience of local school teachers and the federal project officer. The work that went into preparing for that inservice day strengthened the esprit de corps of the project staff by giving them a goal to work for and an audience. At the time of the inservice day, project staff members had already begun to complain that the superintendent's personal approach was not adequate for the complexities of the school system in Willcox. The media specialist remarked that the superintendent had been unable to blend the project staff in with the rest of the school district employees which resulted in misunderstandings and disagreements. His own experience with the high school teachers over control of the "media center" was one case in point. The early childhood coordinator was beginning to complain that the teachers in the elementary school were not friendly with her. In part this was due to the fact that she received a salary that was double that of a beginning teacher. Elementary school teachers who noted that she taught fewer children for only four days a week considered this to be an example of the kind of easy jobs and high salaries that the project

had brought to the schools.

In addition to the salary question, five staff members (including the superintendent) commuted every week between Willcox and Tucson or other communities. Both factors led the teaching staff to consider the project as something foreign to the district throughout the first year.

The inservice day was not successful in communicating substantive information about the programs that made up the project. It did, however, introduce the project staff to all of the teachers and indicated where each of the coordinators worked. The exchange between the evaluation coordinator and the teachers which was quoted above illustrates the development of a public face or façade that emerged during the first year. Except in those classrooms that had reading or bilingual aides, the structure of the project remained a mystery to most teachers. The facade was directed towards ES/Washington, not the local teachers or community. In response to the seemingly unending requests for plan definitions and revisions that Washington had required of Willcox, the project staff had developed their programs to respond to this non-local audience personified on February 18 by the federal project officer. The one exception was the media specialist. He was able to relate his program directly to the teachers because he too was a teacher in the middle and high school. His own background with federal programs at the University of Arizona had given him the confidence to work directly with instituting a media program rather than spending precious energy responding to the perceived demands of federal officials.

The End of the First Year

In early March a new bilingual coordinator was hired in order to appease ES/Washington and to get the bilingual program moving again. The aides who had been left to implement the program had little experience

with schools or bilingual education. They continued to copy classroom workbooks, calendars, and other materials into Spanish, but they lacked the knowledge and resources to implement a comprehensive bilingual program in the schools of Willcox. The new bilingual coordinator was, like so many of the project staff, a resident of Tucson. She had taken coursework in bilingual education at the University of Arizona, although she was primarily trained as a physical education specialist and counselor. She worked very hard during the last three months of the school year developing a "multicultural celebration" for the Cinco de Mayo festivities that were celebrated in the town. This celebration had clowns, puppets, marches by all elementary classrooms, and skits and songs put on by children in the bilingual program. She also held weekly "rap sessions" or "feedback sessions" as she called them, where teachers in the program could voice their opinions about the progress of the bilingual component. She saw these weekly meetings as one of the significant contributions she brought to the schools. Not only were the sessions useful for the component itself, but the coordinator saw them as a general information session where teachers could learn more about the total project. These sessions functioned as weekly inservice workshops similar to the February 18th inservice day discussed earlier.

Anthropologist: How much do you think the teachers know about the Rural Schools project?

Coordinator: At this point, I'm unhappy to tell you, I don't think that more than one-third understand what it is, and that may be a generous estimate. I have tried to talk about the program in individual conferences with each of the teachers, but again, I've had to tread softly so as not to alienate them. The feedback sessions are very valuable. Every Wednesday afternoon we had feedback sessions when the teachers came forth and said what was on their minds and worked towards making up units in Spanish. In the last feedback

> session of the year they shared their frustrations about all of the things that happened during the year. This was good, though. I'd say that the feedback sessions were second in importance to our multicultural celebration.

By the end of the year, this new coordinator had resigned to get married. In May the superintendent announced that he had been offered a job as "compliance officer" with the Tucson schools. His resignation was an element in the ever-widening disagreement between Willcox and Washington. According to the superintendent, he called Washington the day before he announced his resignation to the school board and received a promise from the project officer that there would be no talk about the resignation for a few days. The superintendent said that the project officer called up the president of the Willcox school board and asked him about the resignation. The school board president then called up the superintendent and asked him what he was doing. The superintendent was in the uncomfortable position of providing an explanation to the school board president about how Washington knew about the new job before the school board did. Later the superintendent said that it was all he could do to restrain the local school board from cancelling the project because of the rift that had developed between Willcox and Washington. The project officer at the time was soon transferred to a different section of the federal agency; the superintendent took credit for having convinced the director of the Experimental Schools program in Washington that this should happen.

The end of the year brought the project to its second crisis in as many years. The superintendent left the system, as did the new bilingual coordinator, an elementary school counselor, and the early childhood teacher. The administrative assistant became the new principal of the elementary school as the old principal was moved to the superintendent's office as

business manager. On June 12, the superintendent held a final meeting of the project staff. The superintendent arrived late after driving back from his new job in Tucson. The early childhood coordinator set the tone of the meeting by saying what had been on her mind for the past six months: the project had lost any semblance of unity because of a "lack of communication." She had been unable to attend any of the Monday morning meetings throughout the year as she was teaching her preschool class at that time. She remarked with some bitterness that people on the project staff and in the administration had been talking about her. She announced that she had taken a job teaching in a Tucson elementary school for the next year and was happy to be leaving Willcox. The superintendent breezed into the meeting and began by thanking the staff for working so hard during the year. He went on to discuss his new position. He also announced that some of the teachers had talked to him about forming a local teachers' union in Willcox and cautioned the staff against becoming too upset about this change. As he put it, "We have a union now in the classroom teachers' association only they are ineffectual." After a few more announcements about the budget for the coming year the meeting ended. The short, 35-minute meeting was somewhat anticlimactic for the staff. They had begun the year with the hopes of bringing about major changes in education and ended it looking for different jobs.

But if the Willcox project was in disarray, the same image of confusion was present at the national level within ES/Washington. In an interview at the end of the year, the superintendent described the project as follows:

Anthropologist: What have been the most dissatisfying or frustrating parts of your job this year?

Superintendent: I was very, very frustrated with Washington. Fantastically frustrated. The school board is too. They told me several times, 'Washington needs us more than we need them. Just say so, we'll drop them.' I said 'no, the program is very valuable.' But you know, Allan, the people in Washington still haven't sent us a reimbursement for this quarter.

Anthropologist: They haven't?

Superintendent: No. And they do things like this all the time at their own sweet time. They're up there in Washington, all on vacation. So because they go on vacation, our people go without getting paid. They think, 'the hell with that little district.'

And I'm very frustrated at the people, the self-styled experts that have not had any kind of hard-knocks field experience. They come in here, you know, they come in here once or twice a year and think they're going to save our district and they do this by trying to tell you what to do. But I think that director [of the Experimental Schools program], has too much to do; he can't handle his job. I found, for example, that people in Washington were less knowledgeable than we were about the programs. They're not together over there, you know; they're always fighting amongst themselves. It's like a madhouse at the Institute. The project officers are insensitive; maybe they're overworked, although I can't understand how.

The staff changes, the problems with Washington, a new job and the practical problems of trying to make a plan for changing the schools work led the superintendent to reassess the future of the project. He was asked what kinds of changes one could expect out of the project after it had run its course.

Superintendent: It's always a question of money. But beyond that, I think that the components that had elements of community involvement, like the Community Schools component, are going to stick. I think that there will be a form of bilingual education, at least an awareness of it. It's just like modern math, you know, it will catch on. I don't think we'll continue with the early-childhood program. I don't think it can be supported by this community; this is a conservative community after all.

The reading program will be here, but the emphasis will be from the state and local districts, not the

federal government. I think that the next four or five years are going to be years when reading is pushed, and that's where we're ahead of the game. As far as the media program goes, if there is someone here like Jon, then it will go. But if you have someone who can't work like Jon, then it will just fall by the wayside.

There won't be any "research" or evaluation like the project has now. Every principal will become a researcher. Researchers too often cut their own throats by becoming decision makers rather than just data gatherers.

LOWER EXPECTATIONS: THE SECOND AND THIRD YEARS OF THE PROJECT

In July of 1974 a new superintendent was hired by the Willcox schools. One of his first duties as superintendent was to travel to Washington and meet with federal program officials. He took with him a candidate for the administrative assistant position that became open when the previous assistant took the elementary school principalship (see Table 6-1, p. 185); both were shocked by their introduction to the Experimental Schools program.

The director of the Experimental Schools program humiliated the Willcox educators. The superintendent was expected to have a full knowledge of the past performance of the Willcox project, ideas for the future, and also understand the deteriorating relationship between Willcox and ES/Washington. He simply did not know or understand what had gone on the year before. As he put it later, "There I was, on the job for exactly two days, and these guys in Washington are giving me the third degree about something I didn't know about." He called the retiring administrative assistant who had by then become the elementary principal and asked whether he should continue with the project or drop it. She told him to stand firm and catch the next flight back to Willcox. He did, and in so doing, left

behind the candidate for the administrative assistant position, who decided not to have anything to do with ES/Washington, and went to New York.

This incident characterized the relationship between Willcox and Washington during the second and third years of the project. The new superintendent relinquished all interest and control of the project to a trusted friend, whom he had worked with in Oklahoma. This friend became the de facto project director until he was hired in August, and remained in that position officially until June of 1976 when he found a superintendent position in another school district. The new superintendent began to jokingly refer to the project as the "Rural Schools problem." He saw his job as superintendent as one of getting Willcox back on a steady course again. The project reminded him of an educational "frill" that could do more harm than good:

> Superintendent: The problem with all of these programs is that the teachers aren't ready for them. It's almost like an open school concept. If nobody is ready for an open school, then it won't work. I still say, the teacher who loves to teach and loves kids can do more than all of these programs put together. But how can a teacher in a self-contained classroom get anything done when there are all of these interruptions. First the student has to go over here, then Mrs. Smith comes in and teaches these kids Spanish, and so on. The teacher gets so busy with these things that she can't teach the kids.

To the superintendent, the project was an uncomfortable object in the Willcox schools. The local evaluation coordinator had prepared a diary of the year's events, but there was little in the way of documentation of the project: "If only the last superintendent had left me an account of what happened last year," the superintendent said, "Then I'd know who to believe around here." So the project began the second year as it had the first. In the second year, the project was, in effect, starting out on a more serious and skeptical path than it had traveled in its youth.

The project documentor for the planning year returned to Willcox from the university and discussed with me her understanding. She said that educators throughout the state had become wary of the Willcox schools. "The word is out that the project is too big for anyone to handle." According to this past staff member, the placement service at the university purposely went out of the state to find someone as the new superintendent who was more of a school district manager than an innovator. This indeed fit with the superintendent's conception of himself: "You know which position I can do without?" he asked, "The business manager position. I don't need a business manager; that's what I do best."

His approach to education and the schools was in stark contrast to that of the previous superintendent. He began by locking the door to the superintendent's office because he did not want people just "dropping in" on him. In a talk before the Lions club, he let the community know of his feelings about community participation in the schools:

> Here is an example of our policy book [shows group two heavy volumes of school policy]. That's just to show you how much you have to know as a school person. Now I don't come downtown and tell you people how to run your insurance business or your farm. Well, it's the same thing with us. We know our business better than anyone. Now it may seem like I'm on the defensive, but it seems that everyone thinks they know our job up there at the schools better than we do. Well let me tell you, people, we know it because we do it every day.

In keeping with his ideas that the schools should return to a rational model of business, the superintendent continued administrative staff meetings, but only invited to them the principals, the administrative assistant, and the community schools coordinator. This small group was considered an "administrative team" by the new superintendent and was thought to be one of the improvements over the previous year's unwieldy Monday morning meetings. The new ES/Washington project officer arrived

in Willcox in August and observed this and other parts of the project for two days. He received little hospitality during this first visit. In fact, the superintendent used the project officer's presence at an administrative meeting to argue against the Rural Schools project. Later the superintendent said that he was trying to give this ES/Washington representative a "taste of their own medicine." He consciously used his first meeting with the project officer to redress the humiliating experience he had had in Washington.

Staff Turnover During the Second Year

The staff turnover that began during the first year of the project continued during its second year. Soon after the school year began in August, the evaluation coordinator resigned. She had wanted to become the administrative assistant, and thought that her experience in the research position in the project had entitled her to some career mobility within the district. However, the new superintendent had already decided to bring a friend in as a half-time counselor and half-time project director or administrative assistant. A month later the middle school principal decided that he would much rather teach than administer and so stepped down to take a job as a fifth-grade teacher. One of the counselors who had been hired under the Rural Schools project became the middle school principal. Later in the year the middle school principal also became the coordinator for the "evaluation commitee." This was a teacher and a community group which had been created to take the place of a one-person evaluation department in the schools. After a new counselor was hired in January of 1975, the half-time counselor became the full-time administrative assistant for the project. Later during the year he found a friend in the church he attended who had been a missionary in Mexico. This person

was hired first as a bilingual tutor with other federal funds. At the end of the school year he was brought into the project as the new bilingual coordinator. During the third year of the project, he was told that he would become something of an all-purpose coordinator during the final year of the project: he would be in charge of the bilingual program, the community schools program (the community schools director was not offered a full-time position after the third year), as well as be the administrative assistant. In addition he continued to coach high school football and teach social science classes in the high school and middle school.

At the end of the second year, the elementary principal looked back on the project from the vantage point of her role. She faulted the selection process for the Rural Schools positions for the unexpected staff turnover within the project:

Anthropologist: As you look back on these two years of the project, do you think it was a good idea? What would you have done different if you had to do it over again?

Principal: I think I would have been less ambitious in the writing of the Plan. I think that it was a great idea, a great dream, but I think it was too ambitious and I'm sure the writers did not anticipate the difficulty that we would have in getting people to carry out the plans. I think this has been the really big problem. It's difficult to find people who are willing to give up city life, university towns and so on to live in a rural area like this for any length of time, especially if they haven't grown up in a rural area. If I were hiring someone for a project like this, I would look very carefully into their background to see what kind of childhoold they had because it seems to me that people tend to go back to the kind of environment they grew up in. With the onset of higher costs of gasoline and even lack of gasoline, Willcox is becoming more isolated. I would look for someone who knew how to entertain themself, someone who wouldn't feel they had to go to the theater every week.

I think the bilingual program is especially overly ambitious, given that we have no Spanish-speaking teachers

> on the staff. I think that is something we should probably be considering as we hire new people, but I just hired a person last week and she is not bilingual, but she's a reading specialist with some experience in other areas. You have to balance these things.

In contrast to this monumental turnover in Rural Schools project positions (twenty-three changes in eleven positions for the first three years of the project), the turnover in the teaching staff remained relatively constant. The teaching staff experienced a 23 percent turnover rate at the end of the planning year and a twelve percent turnover rate the second year of the project. The project had become something of a leader in educational change, but this change was in personnel, not in educational programs.

Many of the people who resigned from the project did so out of a desire for career mobility. In addition, the project itself created an ambiguous situation for the educators who were hired to fill the positions. One administrative assistant gave this role ambiguity as a reason why he sought a superintendency elsewhere after two years with the project: "I'm tired of people asking me what I do. It's difficult to explain that I am in charge of federal programs but that I'm not a principal or superintendent." The community schools coordinator put it more bluntly:

> A lot of the time I feel like I'm just spinning my wheels. You can't expect the teaching staff to work with you if you don't know what you're doing, and if you don't know what you're doing, you can't tell them!"

Faced with the ambiguity of having to attempt to fit into the "teacher world" and work with children, or the "administrative world" and work with adults, different project personnel chose between these two alternatives rather than create a new way of working in the schools (Burns 1975b). Some people like the media specialist remained with the project

until its end, even after a job such as "media coordinator" was transformed into a teaching position. Others, typified by the first administrative assistant, turned their position into administrative posts and then attempted to use the Rural Schools experience to advance to another administrative position, especially one within the traditional organizational framework of the schools.

The Project Slows Down

During the second and third years of the project, the individual programs continued their movement toward disunity, a movement which began with the infancy of the project. The Quarterly Reports reflected this movement by describing the project as it existed in each of the three schools rather than as one comprehensive program. The first report expressed commitment to a new start with the new superintendent; its tone was confident, its style succinct. By the end of the year, the tone was much different. Witness this wordy apology for the direction the project had taken:

> "In what ways are your local communities having an influence upon the development and operations of your ES project?" The local communities are influencing the development and operations most strongly by the degree to which certain components and programs are supported or rejected. Reactions in some cases are overt and verbalized by members of the several communities composing the larger community, others are much less obvious and the more difficult with which to deal because the absence of external cues magnifies the possibilities of misinterpretation. A major aspect is the seemingly inherent characteristic of a society to maintain a stable state and resist changes which demand an adjustment in the form of re-ordered systems. Also of significance are the current political and economic conditions which seemed to have ballooned the reticence and caution within the communities and are causing revisions in the philosophy and fiscal priorities of the communities. Simply stated, the universe of the project is shifting in response to the changes.

The excerpt above was in response to one of a series of questions put by ES/Washington officials to the project staff members to find out whether or not comprehensive changes were taking place. They hoped to learn about local conditions and also to check the validity of some interim findings that Abt Associates had produced from its survey research on the ten projects. The Willcox project director responded with the verbose prose that he had developed as a style for writing the Quarterly Reports. This same passage was quoted by a teacher to a faculty committee meeting as an example of the general degeneration of the project and the obfuscation of reality that had occurred during the last year and a half of the project.

Phase Out: Project Activities Become Subsumed Under New Programs

Much of the project activity during the third year centered on preparing for phase out. The period of phase out was originally scheduled to take place during the fourth and fifth years of project implementation, but in fact took place at the end of the third year and throughout the fourth. The new administrative assistant and superintendent went to Washington early in November of 1975 with a proposed contract extension document, a plan for the final two years of the project. The document indicated that Willcox would slowly pick up the programs of the project and fund them at a somewhat lower rate than had been the case when the federal funds were bountiful. Negotiations over the extension of the Willcox contract with ES/Washington continued through the winter and spring of the year. When the contract was still not settled by April, the administrative assistant journeyed to Washington and talked with agency officials. In May the contract extension was finally approved. Eight months later the superintendent told ES/Washington that Willcox was not interested in the final

year of funding and asked that the project be terminated at the end of 1977.

The uncertain but declining activities of the project during the third year demoralized its staff. Project staff turned their energies toward finding jobs for themselves for the next year instead of working night and day for the project as they had done in the first year. The project was in a period of old age during the third year. Classes continued to be taught, programs continued to be implemented, but there was little of the excitement that characterized its first years. Many new programs in the schools vied for the place of honor that the project formerly held. The state department of education in Arizona required an evaluation program for every school district. This program became the main interest of the "evaluation committee" created by the project. The committee concentrated its activities in developing reading and mathematics test instruments that could be used to satisfy this new extra-local taskmaster. In addition, the state took a more active part in the local system by requiring a special education program in all schools. To do this, the school district was required to screen all students with a psychological questionnaire and then implement programs for different categories of special students: mentally or physically handicapped, gifted, and so on.

In the spring of the third year the superintendent began a campaign for a budget override election. Arizona law states that a school district could not exceed its previous year's budget by more than six percent without a vote by district taxpayers. The superintendent found that the school district could move funds from a portion of the budget reserved for building new classrooms to the "maintenance and operation" portion of the budget without raising the taxes of the district. Because such a move would result in a larger "maintenance and operation" budget than

the previous year, a budget override election was necessary. The superintendent took personal responsibility for the budget override and saw the vote as a vote of confidence in his work as a superintendent. To help the override pass, he set up a "Blue Ribbon Panel" of community representatives. They were given classes by the superintendent and other school administrators on school finance. In May a straw ballot was taken. The straw ballot indicated that the override would pass, which indeed it did when the election was held in June.

A national reading program, "Right to Read," was also brought into the system during the third year. The high school Spanish teacher volunteered to be trained for the program. The program did not provide any funds for equipment or program implementation in the schools, but it did provide training for teachers. The teacher who led the program was the niece of the then elementary principal and past reading coordinator for the project. Late in the year the principal proudly told me that the Spanish teacher had decided to get a master's degree in reading because of her interest in the Right to Read program.

In short, by the third year, the Rural Schools project was being thought of as a program from the past. The Quarterly Reports reflected a "devil-may-care" attitude that the administrative assistant and other project staff had that year. On March 31, 1976, Willcox reported that:

> the problems of any significance during the quarter were not internal but external between the Project and the National Institute of Education. Of immediate concern to the Project personnel is the failure to receive Treasury Department warrants on schedule. Past experiences indicate a high degree of probability that inefficiency within NIE will cause further difficulties for the Project.
>
> A second problem for the Project administration has been the confusion within NIE as to the process for determining refunding of the Project for the final two years.

At the end of June, the Willcox Quarterly Report had this to say:

> Potential concerns for the upcoming quarter revolve around (1) the demands on the time of administrative personnel as a result of the reduction in staff, (2) a lessening of the general commitment to the Project at the local level as a reflection of NIE relegating the Experimental Schools division to a subordinate status, and (3) the impact of reduced federal funding coupled with the additional strain on the district for accepting the growing financial burden at a time when district resources are necessitating a reduction in some areas. The consequences of these combined circumstances may contribute to a weakening of the Project's status within the system and decline in local interest in maintaining the Project.

The impending end of the project meant that the people hired by it had to begin looking for jobs for the next year. The media specialist had developed a state-wide reputation because of his ability to create a working television studio in a small school system. During the third year of the project the van that was brought into the district to provide a "classroom on wheels" for the early childhood component was converted into a mobile television studio by students in the media program. This studio was used to videotape football games when the school team traveled to other districts. During several of these games the media specialist was offered jobs in other districts. In December of the third year he was approached by the Tucson school district and went so far as to discuss his possible resignation with the superintendent.

The superintendent had made it known that he was not going to burden the district with the responsibility of keeping the Rural Schools staff after the federal funds ran out. In addition to the media specialist, the administrative assistant and the community schools coordinator both began to look for jobs for the following year, as did the early childhood teacher. The bilingual coordinator suggested to the superintendent that

he could do the Quarterly Reports for the project, direct other federal programs in the schools, and teach social studies in the middle school. This was considered a good idea by the superintendent, and plans were made to make the bilingual coordinator into a combined project director, component coordinator, administrative assistant, teacher, and football coach during the fourth year of the project.

When the project was planned, special provisions were made so that the successful components could be "phased in" to the schools and unsuccessful components dropped. By the time this period of "phase in" began in the third year, the superintendent had made it clear that the school district could not afford to pick up the salaries of the coordinators. Several strategies were proposed to allow for the continuation of some of the ideas and plans of the project without the coordinators. The early childhood program could be staffed by an aide, as there were no certification requirements for early childhood programs at that time in Arizona. The bilingual program could be directed by a past bilingual coordinator and aides who were Mexican American could be hired with other federal funds. The community schools component of the project could revert back to adult education in the form it existed prior to the coming of the project. One of the school teachers could be placed in charge of scheduling community college courses in the schools. The media program could be brought into the industrial arts classes of the middle and high school. The state had already required that an evaluation department in the district be set up so that the schools could be more accountable. In this way the evaluation committee that had been created to review the ongoing progress of the project became the evaluation department which met the new state regulation. The changes in school governance and organization had been

dropped after the third superintendent was hired, as he preferred to work with a small administrative staff of school principals rather than a large staff of project coordinators and other school employees.

The fact that the school district was not going to pick up very much of the project was not a surprise to the community. The superintendent had been preparing residents through columns in the local newspaper, discussions with local businessmen at cafes and other arenas of social interaction, and through discussions with teachers in the schools. Mexican American people in the town had stated as early as the first year of the project that the bilingual component was not being seriously attended to by the school district. Some of the more vocal members of the MANPO organization stated during the first year that the school system was exploiting the Mexican American community in order to get federal funds. They saw the bilingual component as the means by which the school system convinced an agency of the federal government to fund the local project. By the third year the organization was voting to provide funds for the bilingual aides so that they could buy classroom materials for the bilingual component. Members of the organization asked why other components were well-funded during the third year while the bilingual component appeared to them to be "phasing out" of the schools.

When the administrative assistant left the system in June to take a job as superintendent in another district, he remarked that he did not believe that the project would continue through the following year. At the time, it appeared that he was merely stating that his own importance to the project was so great that it could not continue without him. But six months after he left, the superintendent told the remaining project staff that the project would be terminated. By this time only the media

specialist and the bilingual coordinator/administrative assistant remained in coordinator positions. The superintendent felt that the bilingual program could be completely dropped during the final year of the project, but the ES/Washington project officer suggested that if that component were dropped, the district might as well drop the entire project. Since the superintendent did not want the bilingual program and did not feel that the remaining activities of the project were very important to the schools, he agreed and ended the project a year earlier than had been planned. The media specialist was able to find a job immediately in Tucson.

DISCUSSION

The reasons for the rapid decline in interest in the project on the part of the school district are many. One of the most salient problems that the project experienced from its outset was a problem of ownership. Although the project was the legal responsibility of the school district (the contract between ES/Washington and Willcox was made with the Willcox school board), none of the chief administrators felt any personal or professional stake in the project's success. Throughout the year the Plan was written, the first superintendent was planning to leave Willcox. The second superintendent stayed only a year and saw the project Plan and its implementation as something neither the school staff nor community had much interest in. The third superintendent was humiliated by ES/Washington officials during his first days in Willcox; furthermore, he was not certain of the relationship between the written Plan and the activities of the coordinators. The coordinators were to him the residue of the past administration and the project was a frill that was not needed in a school district that needed to return to what he saw as basic education. Because none of the three superintendents saw himself as an owner

of the project in a professional sense, each of them let the projects be carried out by the individual coordinators or administrative assistants. Because of this, the project lacked the legitimacy of an association with the superintendent, and so was not considered important by other people in the schools or community.

A second reason for the decline in interest in the project during the three years its implementation was being attempted was the nature of other federal programs that the school district had been involved with. Most federal funding for education that Willcox had applied for and used was carried out on a year-to-year basis. New opportunities such as funds for the children of migrant workers or funds for special education were a part of the yearly activity of the school district administrative staff. Surveys had to be taken, proposals written, and new employees hired as each new program was added to the schools. In contrast the Rural Schools project was funded for several years at a time. The project was innovative and so required highly specialized people to carry it out, such as media specialists or early childhood teachers. But the project was also based on limited federal support so that the highly specialized people who were hired looked for future jobs even as they worked in Willcox. While other federal programs also experienced many changes in staff, the positions in them were far easier to fill and demanded less specialized knowledge than the positions created by this project.

Another reason for the decline in interest in the project was the educational philosophy of the third superintendent. The third superintendent emphasized attitudes found in much of the popular press at the time that schools should return to basic subjects like language arts, communication skills, and mathematics. He also stated to community groups that the schools' business was the responsibility of the school

administrators, not the responsibility of community groups. As he put it, he did not tell businessmen how to run their businesses, and he did not expect them to tell him how to run his.

The project was never endorsed by the teachers in the schools. Few of the components had been designed by teachers and the project did not offer any teachers mobility within the system. The friendships that the media specialist made with some of the high school teachers resulted in a statement by the teachers' union that the project had great value for education in Willcox, but the project was never able to develop a comprehensive constituency among teachers in all of the schools. While the project was able to bring in consultants to teach courses and provide money for school supplies, it was never seen as an endeavor in which teachers had responsibility, status, or power. What interest individual teachers had in the project tended to be segmented. Even after three implementation years plus a year of planning, the broad outlines of the project remained a mystery to all but a few teachers.

The ending of the project a year earlier than had been originally planned was not a surprise for teachers and residents in Willcox. The project had lost most of the interest it had elicited during the first year of its implementation and was reduced to only a few activities, primarily report writing and a limited early childhood class and a media program. Comprehensive change in the Willcox schools and community proved to be a more difficult task than could be accomplished by the people who created and tried to maintain its Rural Schools project.

CHAPTER SEVEN. CONCLUSIONS

The Rural Schools project in Willcox was a major focus of school and community interest for the greater part of five years. As the federal funds diminished, so did school system and community interest in this kind of planned change. New interests such as accountability examinations for students, "back to basics" as a school philosophy, and a return to the traditional importance of sports as a school-community focus came into favor among school administrators. These changes in the direction of the schools from a concern for attempting a grand experiment to a concern for developing an excellent school system within a traditional framework became more apparent as the Rural Schools project staff members either left town or took regular positions in the schools. Most of those hired for administrative positions in the project left Willcox. The two that stayed became principals.

The Willcox Rural Schools project had come and gone in the community without great commotion or upheaval. The civic community was already more concerned with economic development through the building of a new shopping center, a new lake at the edge of town, and the promise of a new industry for Willcox than with making the school system more of a showcase than it already was. The Chicano community had lost much of their interest in the project by the end

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of the second year because of the lack of attention that was given to the bilingual program by the project directors. A one-hour Spanish program on the local radio station and the development of a strong voluntary association became the focus of much attention of leaders in the Chicano community. In short, the end of the project was not viewed with regret or alarm, as residents recognized the project as one of many ways of bettering the community. The project was not the first, nor would it be the last time Willcox residents sought to improve their community by harnessing the resources of outsiders.

This chapter summarizes the project in Willcox by discussing several questions that residents asked about this program in educational change and then suggests how lessons from this instance of educational programming can be used to more effectively realize the goals of planned change.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PLANNED CHANGE

Educational anthropologists such as Everhart (1976) have suggested that an ethnographic approach to policy research often results in the anthropologist's finding questions rather than answers. Anthropologists involved in community research can easily become the focus of much community question-asking activity as social researchers quickly become identified with knowing more about a small town than any individual or sector of the community does. An important research strategy suggested by Adelman (1976 and personal communication) is to translate the questions asked by participants in a school or community into ethnographic hypotheses. In this way, local questions can become the basis for a framework of policy analysis.

Why Was Willcox Chosen?

Speculation about the reasons for which Willcox was chosen to be a participant in a large federal program continued through every year that the project was active. After all, Willcox was only one of many small towns in the country and residents wondered what special characteristics of the town were seen by those who made decisions in Washington.

When a letter of invitation to apply was sent from Washington to the 7,000 rural school districts, 320 responded with letters of interest. From this group of 320 possible districts, twelve systems were given one-year grants to develop plans for educational change. The selection process which resulted in Willcox's being included in the twelve systems to receive planning grants was straightforward. The announcement from Washington, D.C. (see Herriott and Gross, 1979, Appendix, for full text) stated that a selection committee would be interested in how educators in each district answered the following questions:

> To what extent does your target population of pupils meet predefined criteria for a small school district serving a rural area?
>
> To what extent do your ideas for educational change utilize local strengths and resources to overcome weaknesses in solving local educational problems?
>
> To what extent are the proposed ideas for change, in fact, logical steps to overcome the stated weaknesses?
>
> To what extent will your community be significantly involved in all aspects of the project?
>
> To what extent will the suggested ideas benefit your community as a whole?
>
> How well does the proposed project meet the quest for quality education in small rural schools? (Office of Education 1972)

The letter of response that was written by the middle school principal answered all of the questions in a concerned and detailed way (see Appendix A). The principal discussed the need for more adult education, closer bonds between the schools and the community, and cultural sensitivity. Like so many of the people who were to populate the project after her, the principal was highly educated (she had recently received her doctorate in education from the state university), and was well aware of current educational trends. She especially singled out the fact that Willcox was a Mexican American community for commentary in her letter. She proposed that bilingual education and exchange programs with schools in Mexico be adopted if Willcox received funds for the project. During later years of the project it was generally believed by local and Washington project officials that Willcox had been chosen because of the bilingual education component of the project.

As pointed out by Herriott (1979), the selection process was complex and contained several panels of consultants who rated each project's letter of interest. The decision to fund Willcox was thus in part based on the quality of the letter of interest. The letter from Willcox was well-planned and executed (see Chapter Three). The emphasis on community education, outdoor classrooms, and bilingual education were innovative ideas that fit well with the mission of the U.S. Office of Education. When the geographic locations of all ten school systems that were selected are reviewed (see Fig. 7-1), it seems plausible to suggest that regional characteristics were also important in the selection process. Willcox was the only rural district selected in the southwestern part of the U.S. (However, both Texas and California had

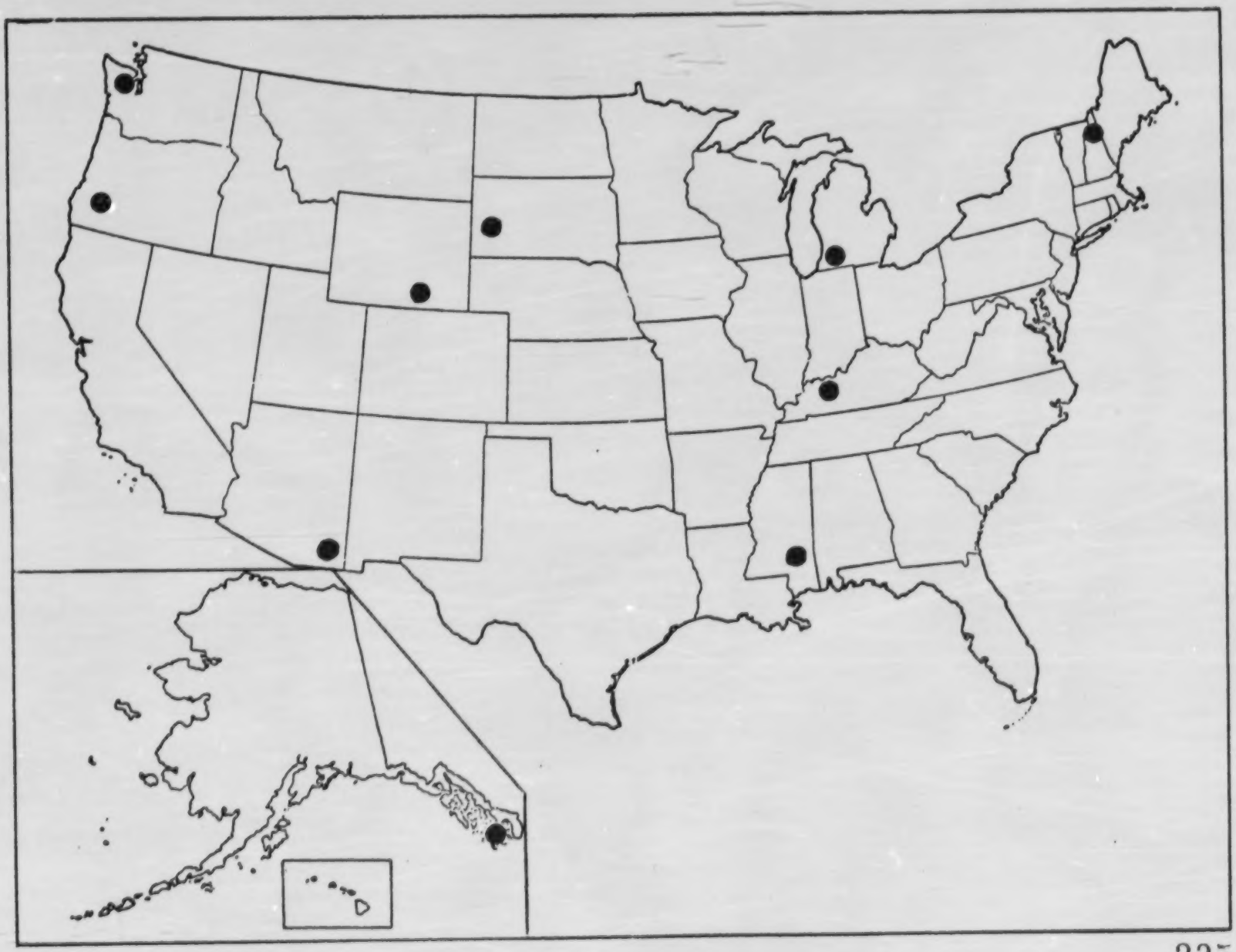

Figure 7-1. Geographical locations of the ten Experimental Schools Projects for Small Schools Serving Rural Areas

urban Experimental Schools projects.) There were only five other districts in Arizona that applied for the program, so the competition from other districts in the region was slight.

It is quite plausible that Willcox received the Experimental Schools funds because the school system presented an image of confidence, competence, and a recognition of problems that could be solved with the application of money. That the school district was in the Southwest, where interest in bilingual education was developing, most likely gave the letter of interest an extra emphasis for the Washington selection committee.

What was the Project?

The Experimental Schools program as conceived within the U.S. Office of Education was designed to try out the idea that "significant and lasting improvements in education, beyond those made possible by piecemeal innovative elements, are more likely to occur if comprehensive changes are introduced into all elements of a school system" (Office of Education 1972). To this end, program designers in Washington felt that educational change stood a better chance of being accepted if it were implemented over a long period of time. So each school system was to be given funds, first for one year of planning and subsequently for five years of implementation. The original conception of the program also stressed local involvement of communities and as much local control over budgetary decisions, staffing choices, and school organization as possible in a federal program. The Experimental Schools program was a chance for small schools to try out local innovations with very little external guidance or interference.

The writers of the Willcox plan for a local project took their lead from the federal government's stance on the program and proposed that the major theme of the Willcox project would be to "assist the school district in implementing a comprehensive program within which students will become increasingly responsible for: (1) their individual behavior, (2) their contributions to society, and (3) their independence in learning" (Willcox Public Schools 1973a:1; emphasis in original).

According to the plan, the means by which this was to be accomplished revolved around five major "components" of change: curriculum; staff training and utilization; the use of time, space and facilities; administration, organization and governance; and the community-schools partnership. In addition, a sixth component of the project would be local evaluation. The evaluation component would provide local educators with data so that they could judge the progress of the project and make any mid-course adjustments that might be necessary. The people who were hired to direct the different programs and components of the project became known as "coordinators," and, except for the administrative assistants who were later hired for the local project, all of the coordinators held equal status.

The project also employed a number of secretaries, aides for the bilingual and the reading program, and clerical aides. During the third year of its implementation, 35 people were employed by the project.

The project was seen differently by different people. For example, the second superintendent saw the project as a means to gain experience with federal agencies; he later took a job with a larger school district as a "compliance officer," someone who would deal full time with the demands of the federal government on local schools. The third superintendent saw the

project as one of the unfortunate features of a system he inherited: to him the project was not the "Rural Schools project" but the "Rural Schools problem."

To most of the project coordinators as well as to agency officials in Washington, the project was the center of the Willcox school system. It was the axis around which turned the other educational programs and activities. In contrast to this view, teachers in the school system did not have a clear picture of a unitary project. Instead they saw its results at the classroom level. They knew the media specialist or the early childhood "teacher" and saw the project as a collection of individual programs located in each school. To much of the teaching staff the project was something of a "fifth wheel" of dubious necessity. Community residents had a view of the project that was similar to that of the teachers. While many people had experience with particular parts of the project, few saw any thread running from the preschool program to the adult education classes. Like teachers, community members recognized only those portions of the project that they came in contact with. This lack of knowledge about the project was a major cause for concern by project administrators. In early 1976 the administrative assistant in charge of the project wrote in the proposal for the final two years of funding that:

> Another disenchanting feature has been the lack of understanding of the Project by a large segment of the community including school personnel, although the programs have been discussed and explained time after time to many of the same individuals. Consequently, although goals and objectives are being achieved, the successes are often not attributed to changes brought about through Project efforts (Willcox Public Schools 1976:8).

A series of questions similar to this basic inquiry revolved around each of the components of change that Willcox attempted. Perhaps

the most asked of these was about bilingual education. For many people, bilingual education was equated with second language learning. The theme of the Willcox bilingual component emphasized the learning of Spanish as a second language in the classroom, and for this reason many teachers considered the component to be an addition to the curriculum, a new subject area that could be offered to the students in the Willcox schools. This was not the intent of the original proposal, nor is it a complete bilingual program. Bilingual education is a method for teaching in all subject areas: it does not stress a particular linguistic code but rather emphasizes instruction in all the codes in use in a community (cf. U.S. Commission on Civil Rights 1975, Fishman 1976). In other words, bilingual-multicultural education programs seek to bring to the classroom some of the stylistic, social, and nationality varieties in language use present in a community, rather than teaching in one language, dialect, or style. Bilingual-multicultural education as it was conceived in the Willcox plan was a <u>way</u> of teaching that would be sensitive to the languages of the community (Willcox Public Schools 1973:30-36).

Next to bilingual education, the component of the project that generated the most interest was the community-schools component. The community-schools component was an attempt to formalize and expand the participation of residents in the school system. To this end the director of this component organized adult education classes in belly-dancing, citizenship, Indian jewelry and the like. The coordinator also organized the use of school space so that schedule conflicts would not occur between community groups using the school facilities and the school's traditional activities. The director of the community-schools component had to become something of a public relations specialist for the school system as he

attempted to generate interest and participation in the activities sponsored by his component. He became neither fish nor fowl as he tried to bridge the gap between the schools and the community. Some businessmen asked repeatedly what his job was since he seemed to be spending much of his time drinking coffee at the local cafes. School teachers sometimes referred to him as someone who could not be hired as a teacher and so got a quasi-administrative job. Many of the community-school component activities were being carried out informally prior to the development of the project. The high school counselor regularly opened the school gym for Sunday afternoon basketball scrimmages; the biology teacher used the nearby national monument for field trips. In this instance the result of the federal project was the formalizing of already existing patterns. This resulted in a greater efficiency in the use of school facilities and the development of a stronger adult education program.

Was the Project a Success?

Harry Wolcott (1975) has described the education profession as one where participants are continually asking of themselves and outside observers, "How am I doing?" I found that indeed this was a common question put to me while doing the documentation of the project. In part this reflected a general anxiety about spending large amounts of federal money and my own place as an independent investigator, but it also reflected a less pragmatic concern for understanding just what was happening with the project.

Local officials report that reading scores for elementary grade children did go up during the time of the project, although it is not possible to prove a cause-and-effect relationship between the efforts

of the reading program and these test scores. The reading program changed each year as the coordinator moved from her position in the federal project to the principalship of the elementary school. As principal, the reading specialist could command more authority than the project had previously allowed her in order to make the teaching of reading a priority in the school.

But while the interest in reading was gaining prominence in the popular press under the rubric of "returning to the basics," and the teachers were gratefully accepting new books and workshops as a result of the project, the local evaluation team found that reading scores for above-average students were not improving (Willcox Public Schools 1976:16). Like the other components of the project, the reading program was a qualified success. It was a success for the coordinator who first began implementing it: she was able to use her administrative experience in her application for the elementary principalship. It was a success for many teachers: they received training in teaching methods and advanced on the district pay scale as a result of reading courses taught by university professors. It was a success for some residents: they were able to get jobs as reading aides as a result of the project. It was a success for some students: below-average pupils improved their test scores.

I have touched on the reading program because it was directed at tangible results. But a similar case could be made for the other project components. In a more general sense, the project had several positive and direct impacts on the community. The project brought new people with highly specialized areas of expertise to the community. The media specialist left a job at the University of Arizona to work in Willcox. When the project was completed he had created a television production studio in

the Willcox schools and had developed courses for middle and high school students in graphics, offset printing, photography, and television production. Through his network of friends in the field of media he was able to convince a large television station in Tucson to donate over $350,000 worth of television equipment to the Willcox schools. In 1977 the media specialist left Willcox to take a position in the college system again. The kind of excitement and commitment that he brought to the Willcox schools was paralleled in many of the other people that the project drew to the community. Their expertise was not limited to areas of concern to only those involved in the school system. The media specialist's experience with graphic design was used by Chamber of Commerce promotions. The project director for the last two years produced advertisements at the local radio station. One individual brought in by the project as a counselor was a competent farrier.

Thus, the project attracted people with skills that went beyond an academic subject or administrative area. Because of this the very presence of these people in Willcox resulted in a strengthening of school and community ties. Many of these project coordinators joined community organizations and churches and made significant contributions to these sectors of community life. The project coordinators and other people brought into the schools as aides through the project provided new examples of successful adults for students in the schools. During the first year of implementation the project brought in five bilingual aides, an early-childhood coordinator, a media coordinator, and a superintendent who were Mexican American. Prior to this time the only Mexican Americans in the school system were janitors, cafeteria aides, and one Spanish teacher. The project not only provided these new role models for students, but also

provided a way for Mexican Americans in the town to enter the schools as professionals. Several of the aides hired for the bilingual program became acquainted with the new program in bilingual education at the University of Arizona and began taking courses with the intent of becoming bilingual educators.

Another way in which the project experienced success was in planning and implementing new programs. Even though there was a lot of turnover in staff positions in the project, the schools were able to bring about such changes as a preschool program for four-year olds. Likewise, a special bus was equipped first as a classroom on wheels and later as a media van. The district implemented all of the components through a process of adaptation and realignment with the changing forces influencing the schools each year.

The project itself served as a foundation upon which Willcox received some notoriety. The state teacher's association printed articles on the components, the local and city newspapers reported on project activities, and the media program became known throughout the state as the project van videotaped sports events at distant schools. This notoriety can be seen as a useful public image or façade (Smith and Keith 1971) which allowed those connected with the project to step up to different positions in the public education system of the region. The first superintendent went on to become the president of a community college; the second took a position with the Tucson school district administration. Others from the project staff used their experience in Willcox to get jobs as superintendents, principals, and teachers in other districts.

On the negative side, the project can be seen as a force which prevented some changes from occurring. School administrators felt that

one federal program was more than enough for Willcox, and tended to legitimize those innovations that could be fit into the rubric of the project and to ignore others. Even though there were promises that the federal government would fund the project for the total five years, local educators read reports of the difficulties that NIE (ES/Washington's parent agency) found itself in and interpreted these difficulties as signs of a lack of a future for the institute. The project staff in Willcox was sent a Washington-based newsletter, the Report on Education Research, as a result of receiving NIE funds. The Report often had disquieting headlines such as "NIE Will Pare Obligations in Struggle for Survival" (August 28, 1974). This created a local atmosphere of uncertainty. Some project staff never set up a residence in Willcox but commuted from other towns and cities. As a result many people associated with the project began to be viewed as carpetbaggers who were living off the easy federal money without making a commitment to the community.

The project was often slowed down considerably because of the uncertainty of the relationship between Willcox and Washington. The Experimental Schools program had an initial philosophy of attaching as few strings as possible to the local school systems. But at times the federal project officers assigned to each district made seemingly capricious demands of local educators. In addition, local educators found it extremely difficult to believe they really had the kind of control over the project that Washington officials said they did. The project staff spent hours preparing Quarterly Reports and then complained that ES/Washington officials neither read nor commented on them.

The project reinforced and legitimized one kind of educational leadership and change over the balance of other forces in a community

that provide for a strong school system. Under the aegis of the project, educational change that emanated from the upper levels of school administration became defined as the most prestigious and effective way of bringing in new programs. The project was a living example that innovations proposed by the superintendent and his or her staff can result in a million-dollar contract with the federal government. In contrast, a program supported by the county provided grants of one hundred dollars to teachers who suggested new curriculum units that involved career education. The Willcox project followed the general pattern described by Berman and McLaughlin (1974:7) in that it was begun at the top levels of the administration and slowly filtered down to different levels in the schools. Although I am unaware of any evidence to suggest that community-, teacher-, or student-initiated changes would have been any more effective in this case, much of the resentment over the Plan's being forced upon the schools and community might have been mitigated if a more universalistic approach to educational change had been taken.

How Was the Project Money Spent?

School systems and other organizations often distinguish between funds that are derived locally or from traditional sources and those funds derived through grants from external agencies. The latter are called "soft money" because it is often felt that the funds are short-term and likely to be withdrawn at any time. The Willcox project was unusual because the amount of "soft" money that was available was close to a million dollars. During the time of the project the district's total budget averaged a million dollars a year. The soft money in Willcox was quite significant: it represented between 15 and 20% of the budget. The level

of funding varied from year to year (see Fig. 7-2). The Rural Schools project spent $255,963 in 1975-76; the next largest federal project in Willcox, a Title I reading project, had a budget of $38,273 in 1975-76.

The salaries that were paid to Rural Schools project employees were greater than those paid for teachers by an average of $3,000. But the project did not spend an undue amount in either salaries or supplies. The district's basic budget called for salary expenditures of about 67% of the total budget and about 14% for supplies. The project budget in these areas was similar. The proportion of the project budget spent on salaries for the four years of the contract (1973-1977) was an average of 70%. The budget for supplies averaged 9.3%. Contrary to what many critics of the project assumed, the percentage of the total budget for salaries and supplies actually decreased between 1973 and 1977 (see Table 7-1).

The project tended to pay the professional staff at significantly higher salary scales than other school district employees. In the 1972-73 school year the base or starting pay for a teacher was $6,700; the highest teacher salary was $12,261 and the average $9,511. The Rural Schools project in its first year of implementation (1973-74) paid a low salary of $11,274, a high salary of $17,760, and an average salary of $13,780 for the seven coordinators who were brought in to help administer its programs. Of course the coordinators were not classroom teachers; two of them had master's degrees and the other five had bachelor's degrees. Their duties required skills of both teachers and administrators, and so their salaries reflected their ambiguous positions between these two occupations in the school system.

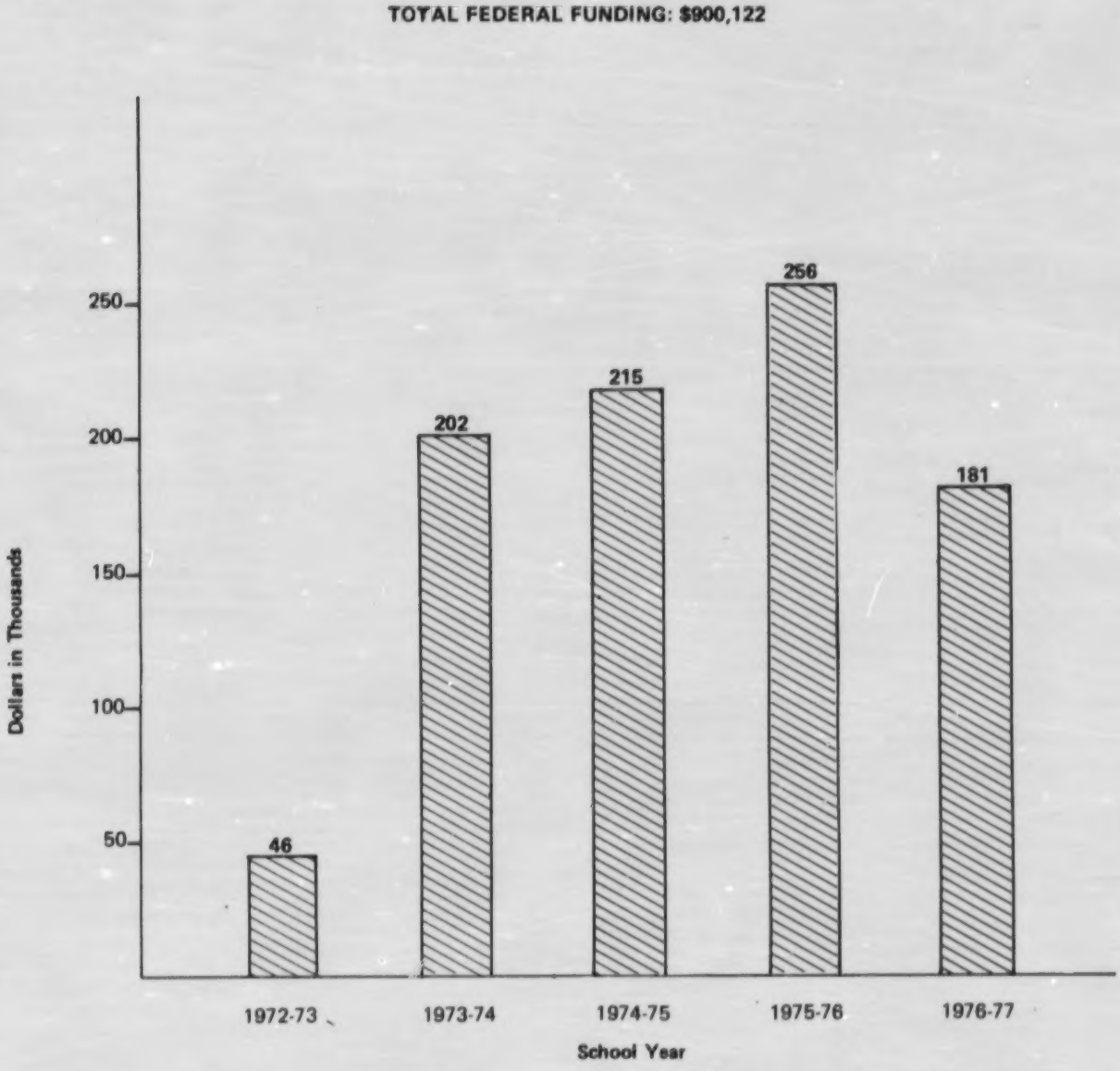

Figure 7-2. Level of federal funding of Willcox Experimental Schools project by school year

Table 7-1. Willcox Rural Schools Project Budgets by School Year, 1972-1977

Budget Item	School Year				
	72-73	73-74	74-75	75-76	76-77
Administration					
Salaries	$7,500	$43,622	$27,819	$28,007	$17,750
Supplies and Newsletter	3,150	2,859	4,580	3,800	650
Travel	3,200	1,314	1,819	4,800	1,425
Operation	1,000	553	744	800	800
Community Participation	2,250	506	424	800	-0-
Fixed Charges	-0-	5,176	4,811	4,670	3,248
Evaluation	12,500	6,558	1,713	12,175	5,700
County Assessment	-0-	-0-	2,963	2,609	1,840
Elementary					
Salaries	8,650	81,730	91,731	115,460	93,307
Supplies	-0-	6,863	6,858	6,200	4,150
Travel	-0-	-0-	80	500	300
Consultants	3,500	684	911	1,200	1,500
Self-Appraisal	-0-	-0-	199	500	200
Summer School	-0-	-0-	3,470	2,500	1,500
Fixed Charges	-0-	8,220	10,761	15,040	13,439
Textbooks	-0-	3,339	755	1,035	945
Capital Outlay	-0-	6,330	3,970	2,000	-0-
Secondary					
Salaries	4,750	27,416	33,678	32,985	21,959
Supplies	-0-	90	23	75	-0-
Audiovisual	-0-	527	884	1,750	1,750
Self-Appraisal	-0-	-0-	350	300	100
Consultants	-0-	484	-0-	-0-	300
Pupil Transport	-0-	201	2,204	4,414	4,125
Summer field trips	-0-	-0-	4,371	3,500	2,000
Recreation	-0-	439	599	2,700	-0-
Fixed Chages	-0-	3,281	4,668	5,143	3,478
Capital Outlay	-0-	1,987	4,519	3,000	-0-
TOTALS*	46,500	202,179	214,904	255,963	180,576

(Source: Willcox Public School records)

*The total across the five-year period is $900,122.

A second major portion of salary funds went into the bilingual and reading program aides. In the 1973-74 budget, the total for these two groups was $56,296. This money was divided among eighteen aides so that each aide made $3,128 for 182 days of work (the official number of school days in the year), or about $2.46 an hour.

The original conception of the project was that after the programs were planned and brought into the schools, a period of federal "phase-out" would take place during the last two years of the project so that the district could slowly take the financial responsibility for the innovations. According to this rational plan the level of funding for the project would decrease slightly during 1976-78 as the school district supplanted federal funds with local funds. This logical sequence was not followed, however; in 1976 the district decided that, rather than being coerced into continuing the project with local funds, it was more sensible to end the project one year early and thus end all obligations between Willcox and Washington.

Why Did So Many People Resign from the Project?

Staff turnover on the project was surprisingly high. The administrative assistant who prepared the contract extension proposal in 1975 discussed the problem as follows:

> A major drawback in the Willcox Project has been the high incidence of Project personnel turnover in the first two years. In the first twenty-four months following the planning period the Project experienced the following "new" personnel: two superintendents, two administrative assistants, three principals, two evaluators, three counselors, three bilingual coordinators, two early childhood coordinators, two School Board members plus teachers new to the system. Added to these figures are the problems inherent in having three Project Officers in Washington, D.C. Each time a personnel change occurred, particularly upper administrative positions, the Project was affected while the individual became oriented, by philosophic differences, and in some instances wandered until a vacancy was filled. (Willcox Public Schools 1976:7-8)

During the third year of implementation the number of changes in project positions decreased considerably. This led many people in the administration to talk about the stability that the third superintendent brought to the system. However, the fourth year was another year of turnover: the community-schools coordinator was "phased out" of the project, as was the early childhood coordinator. The administrative assistant who wrote the extension proposal cited above applied for and was hired as superintendent in another district.

The reasons for these changes were many. In some cases the coordinators could not get along with colleagues. The first bilingual coordinator, for example, resigned after a month and a half because he could not work well with the administrative assistant. In other cases the coordinators found that Willcox was not a community that interested them. The second bilingual coordinator kept her house in Tucson and stated quite candidly in interviews that she did not consider Willcox her home. Beyond these personal reasons for leaving the project, there were patterns in many of the moves which point to some general effects of the project. The fact that the project was considered a "supplement" to the normal operation of the schools left the coordinators with the feeling that they were superfluous to the district. But yet they were expected to be the change agents for the schools for five years. Duties and expectations were not clearly defined since the whole idea of the project was new. These uncertain features of the project tended to first of all draw people who were not well-rooted in traditional school systems. The coordinators were reading specialists, employees of national education organizations, or lower-level administrators. Second of all, the project

subjected these people to ambiguity and uncertainty. In this sense the project pushed people through positions more quickly than the district did.

The project was a good stepping stone as well. The notoriety and interest that the project created served many of the coordinators well as they used their association with this federal program to heighten their visibility in the world of school system employment. In this sense, the coordinators were pulled from the project by other districts that valued their expertise.

What Will be Done with Your Study?

At the federal level, one of the goals of the Experimental Schools program was to bridge the worlds of research and practice in education. This was why the Experimental Schools program devoted almost as much money to research on each project as on project development and implementation. Federal officials felt that finding out what actually happened during the time of the projects was as important as the changes that were planned. This volume is one in a series of case studies that were researched in ten small rural communities that had Experimental School projects.[1] There are also several survey and demographic cross-site studies available from Abt Associates which explore the history of each community prior to 1972 and the organizational changes, student changes, and community changes that occurred during the time of the ten projects.[2]

While the field research for this study was being carried out, some of the early historical and contextual information that was assembled for this case study was published by the local newspaper in Willcox. The local newspaper also published two booklets on the community, one

commemorating the first 100 years of the town and another commemorating the bicentennial of the United States. Portions of the "Social and Educational History of Willcox" (Burns 1975c), which was prepared during the first year of research, were also published in these booklets. In addition to these local outlets for the research, it was possible to have several articles based on the research published in journals (cf. Burns 1975a, 1976a, 1978), and others presented at regional and national meetings of educators and social scientists (cf. Burns 1975b, 1975d, 1976b).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY

The documentation and evaluation that Abt Associates Inc. contracted to carry out for the National Institute of Education was conceived of as research that would describe the effects of this kind of federal aid to education. Although the information that has been gathered for this study cannot affect the particular project in Willcox, the research suggests several recommendations that could be applied to future attempts at educational change.

The Willcox project spent over a year and a half preparing a working document or Plan so that the changes would be well-designed before they were brought into the schools. Unfortunately, much of the time spent revising the plan during the first year of implementation resulted in an attitude of isolation and siege among project staff. Instead of bringing the excitement and enthusiasm of each staff member's new position to bear on the structure and process of education in Willcox, much of the energy of the first implementation year was spent revising the plan, writing performance objectives, and attempting to somehow appease federal officials.

When the actual activity surrounding the writing of the Plan is reviewed, it can be seen that the process took only a few months. Approximately one month was used for carrying out a community study of needs and hopes for the schools, a second month was spent on committee meetings of community members, and a third on writing the document. The implementation of the Plan followed the broad outlines of the document, but the expertise and interests of each new staff member resulted in great changes in the content of each program or component within the Plan. Instead of attempting to fit what each person was doing into the structure of the Plan, a more realistic approach would have been to use the quarterly reports as conscious and overt extensions of the Plan in order to communicate to its federal sponsors that the project was indeed evolving.

The project had the characteristic of attracting outside staff members for key staff positions rather than educators or community residents from within Willcox. While the community has had a long tradition of reaching to cities and other non-local resources in the past (Burns, 1978), in the case of this project, such a strategy had an effect of isolating project staff from the teachers and community. The community-schools program was one component in which a local person was hired for a coordinator position. The person hired was one of the few staff members to remain with the project through the three years of implementation which suggests that other components might have had greater continuity if more local people had been hired. This would have been especially important in the bilingual-multicultural component which during the implementation years saw three different coordinators and more than a year without any coordinator (Burns 1975b, 1976b).

Bilingual education programs demand that school content of this kind of change be in close synchrony with other community institutions. While it is certainly possible for an outsider to learn the community contexts of bilingualism and use this knowledge in a school program, local residents can also be used to an advantage; they can bring to a program a commitment to remain in the community and keep a bilingual program from becoming either a political "football" in school politics or an isolated "Spanish as a second language" class in the schools. A local person interested in bilingual education can be trained in the theory and methods through a fellowship program at a nearby university and in this way mitigate any professional hostility that may exist among teachers in a school system. In a community like Willcox, there are often several people of Mexican American background who have degrees in education or other college disciplines. Still others have strong personal and intellectual commitments to bilingualism. One shortcoming of the Willcox project was that it passed over these local people for coordinator positions in bilingual education and instead brought in outsiders who were strangers to the community and to Mexican American culture. In this regard, the Willcox bilingual component typified what Kjolseth (1972) described for many bilingual programs in the U.S.: it was administered by outsiders who had little familiarity with local language styles or culture, it was not considered permanent, the community was the recipient rather than the resource for the program, and the program was directed at assimilating Mexican American children into the Anglo-controlled school system.

The relationship between the federal government and the Willcox school system was never clear to school officials. At times ES/Washington

appeared to be a colleague and at other times an adversary. ES/Washington formed a kind of "school board at a distance" in that it had control over funds, persuaded school officials to attempt particular programs, and gave advice on everyday school problems. But the changes in political climate, agency officials, and amount of funds available to its parent agency (the National Institute of Education) made it difficult for local educators to predict how ES/Washington would react in any particular situation. By the end of the third year the superintendent and the administrative assistant had become convinced that the agency was incompetent. Pay vouchers were not being sent out, telephone calls were not being answered, and the infighting that was taking place in the agency became the topic of much conversation in Willcox. Although little could be done to change such things as the uncertain fiscal status of an agency like NIE, the relationship between ES/Washington and Willcox could have been made more precise if much of the responsibility for project monitoring and fiscal evaluation had been placed with the school board in Willcox. In this way the project staff would have written reports and satisfied demands of people who were elected in the community and who knew from many sources the problems and needs of the district. By placing all project monitoring in the hands of an official of a federal agency and then leaving that official with minimal travel funds, this relationship between Willcox and the federal government was doomed to failure.

The problems that Willcox faced in the early 1970s when this project was planned still existed when the project ended in 1977. The school district continued to find it difficult to finance a modern curriculum in a small school system, the community did not always take an active

part in school activities, and the organization of education in this rural community was not considered responsive by all teachers or taxpayers. The project was unable to drastically change the face of education in Willcox, but this does not mean that change did not occur. Many of the changes were short term. The project brought new people into the community, provided for the use of audiovisual and graphics materials that had been gathering dust in school closets, allowed for some experiments with new staffing patterns, and gave some notoriety to the schools and community. Many students were able to learn more about educational and career possibilities through their interaction with the project staff, and several adults were able to pursue their high school or college educations as a result of project activities. These short-term changes are not as exciting as the dramatic changes hoped for in the original conception of the project, but they should be valued and recognized just the same.

EPILOGUE: CASE STUDY RESEARCH IN A SOUTHWESTERN TOWN

At the outset of the Willcox project, five-year, contracted funding was a new kind of federal intervention into local school systems. That a group of ten small districts would attempt drastic and comprehensive changes in rural education was an untested idea. A well-funded independent evaluation of the ten five-year projects was also an unusual venture. Together, this combination of program design and its study made for an experiment, an experiment directed at discovering if this approach was any more effective than previous attempts at making schools better institutions. The Experimental Schools program did not follow prescribed rules of experimental design. Funds were not sent out to school systems chosen from a random sample. The innovations for which each school system planned were not subject to control and experimental group differentiation. The Experimental Schools program of the federal government was not so much a scientific experiment in the tradition of the physical sciences as it was an experiment such as might be common in the disciplines of ethology or paleontology. The program was an attempt to judge whether this new approach to educational and community change would be effective in practice rather than in theory. The only real "guinea pigs" in the exploration of this uncharted terrain were possibly the scholar-bureaucrats who thought up the program in the first place.

The federal budget for the ten rural Experimental Schools projects (there were also several urban projects) was over seven million dollars for the five-year period. An investment of this size for educational change was quite large for a relatively new agency, but even more unusual was the investment of approximately five million dollars in an independent documentation and evaluation of the local projects. In June 1972 the U.S. Office of Education contracted with Abt Associates Inc., a private research company, to design and implement a long-term examination of what happened in the ten school systems. To this end Abt Associates hired an experienced and well-known sociologist to lead an evaluation project, known within the organization as "Project Rural." Project Rural called for "on-site" researchers who would live in each of the ten communities to document firsthand what was accomplished as well as "cross-site" researchers who would direct surveys from the main office in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The research budget for the first five years (1972-1977) was just over four million dollars. This budget included salaries and benefits for ten field researchers, a series of social scientists in Cambridge, and several secretaries, coders, and other support personnel.

The design of Project Rural combined careful inquiry into each school system and community through the use of ethnographic techniques with comparative studies cutting across the ideographic concerns of each case study. These comparative studies became known as the "Pupil Change," "Organizational Change," and "Community Change" studies. (A more complete description of these studies and the research context for them can be found in Fitzsimmons et al, 1972.) The ideographic studies were characteristically hesitant about making early assumptions. Thus, in contrast

Staff members from Abt Associates met regularly with National Institue of Education officials.

Doing fieldwork often required that the ethnographer be in the middle of school activities.

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to the three cross-site studies which emphasized "change" in their titles, the site-specific studies were known simply as "ethnographic case studies" (cf. Burns 1975a).

The National Institute of Education inherited the Experimental Schools program from the Office of Education in August 1972. At that time ES included six rural sites. Willcox was one of the four rural school systems officially added to the program in June 1973. So, at the beginning of the Willcox project, the relationships between contracted research, contracted change, and a federal agency were complicated not only in an organizational sense, but also in a temporal sense. When I was introduced to the superintendent in 1973, he and other people connected with the project might have ideally seen the organization of the Experimental Schools program as illustrated in Figure E-1.

FIELD RESEARCH IN THE COMMUNITY OF WILLCOX

My family and I lived in Willcox for three years, from August of 1973 until August of 1976. During that time we saw several superintendents, administrators, teachers, and residents come and go. We saw the project move from being an idea on paper to a reality in the schools and classrooms of Willcox and then slowly wither during its third and fourth years until it was officially declared over a few months after we left the community (see Table E-1).

When we first arrived in the town of Willcox we stayed in a motel at the edge of town. We drove a rented car and ate most of our meals at those restaurants that catered to tourists. Within a few weeks we had found a place to live and had become accepted residents of the community. At the time I was surprised at the ease with which we were

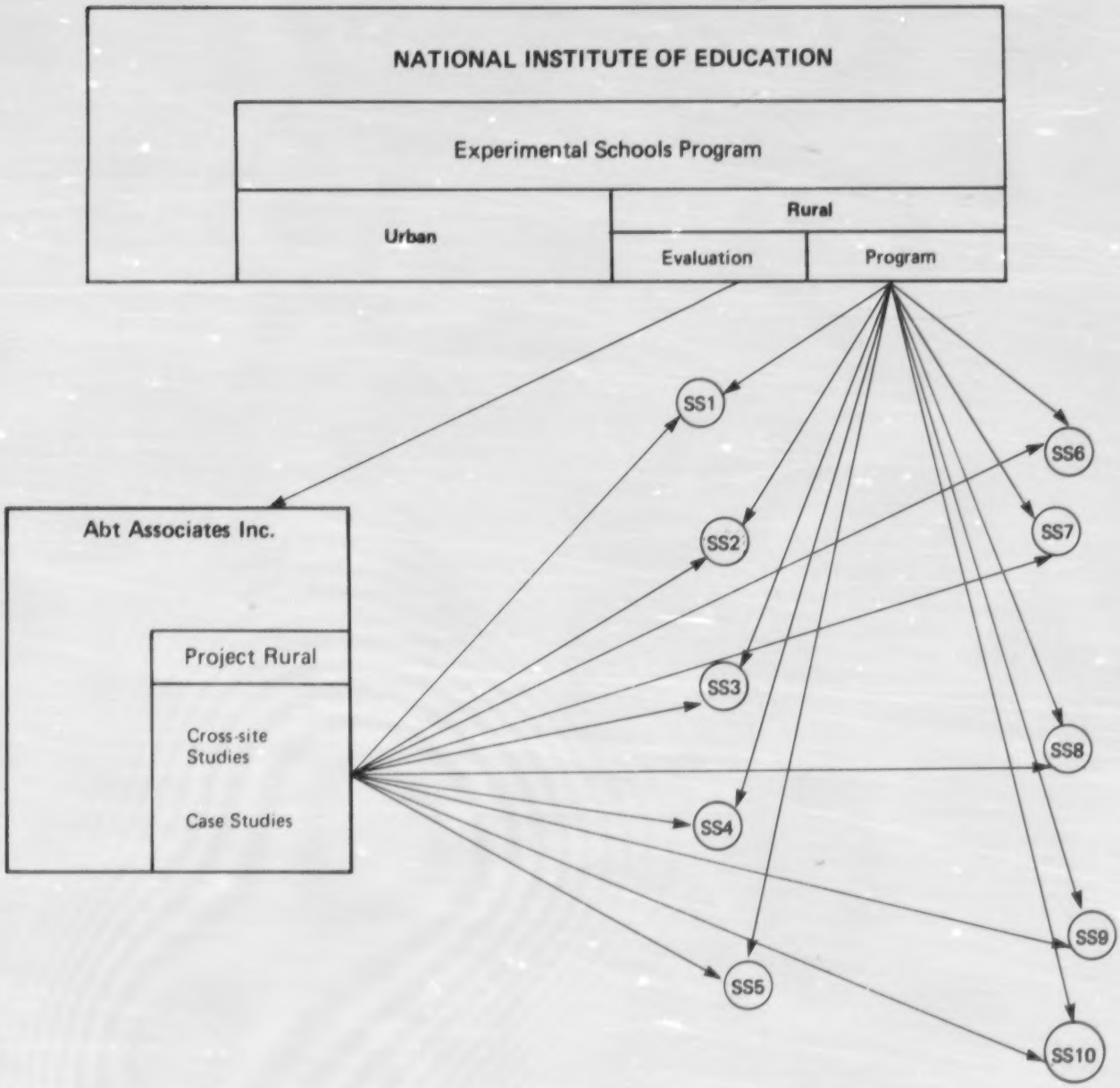

Figure E-1. Idealized relationships among the National Institute of Education, Abt Associates Inc., and the ten rural school systems

Table E-1. A Chronology of the Major Events in the Willcox Rural Schools Project and in the Case Study Research

PROJECT/ SCHOOL YEAR	PROJECT ACTIVITY	FUNDS AND TYPE	CASE STUDY ACTIVITIES
(1971-72)	Announcement of competition sent from Washington. Letter of Interest sent from Willcox.	0	Retrospective interviews and school records reviewed.
I/ (1972-73)	"Comprehensive Changes in the Willcox Public Schools" written. Major changes in administration: superintendent and 2 principals resign.	$ 46,500 (grant)	Retrospective interviews, school records, project log.
II/ (1973-74)	Project begins. Major changes in administration: superintendent, 6 project coordinators, 1 principal resign. New Washington project officer assigned.	$202,179 (contract)	Residence in Willcox begins, fieldwork begins.
III/ (1974-75)	Project implemented. Major changes in administration: 2 new principals, new superintendent, 2 new administrative assistants. New Washington project officer.	$214,904 (contract)	Field research on schools and community.
IV/ (1975-76)	Project implemented, phase-out planned. Major administrative changes: 2 administrative assistants, 3 coordinators released.	$255,963 (contract)	Field research continues, ends in August, 1976.
V/ (1976-77)	Phase-out of project begins, project ends one year early, June 1977.	$180,576 (contract)	No new data gathering. Write-up of report.

incorporated into the everyday lives of the people of Willcox. On my first day of regular work the superintendent took me on a grand tour of the town, introduced me to the city manager, police chief, and other prominent officials. We found an office that could be used for my research on the side of the police station which I graciously refused, not wanting to become associated with the city government. Later the superintendent took me to meet the editor of the local newspaper and we found that a small office was available for rent two doors down from the newspaper office on the main street of the town. Later that day we made arrangements to rent the house of an administrator who was leaving the system to take a job as manager of a hospital. He and one of the new people hired for the local project took me down to a local bar where we talked and drank for several hours. Within one day our status had changed from that of outside visitors to welcome residents.

Three years was a long time to do intensive research in a small town, as has been well documented by Wacaster and Firestone (1978). By the time we left the community, we had become "old timers": we knew several hundred people quite well, we were active in many city and voluntary associations, and we had lived and made our home in Willcox longer than many current residents. Willcox was a town where many families came and went as the local employment situation changed for better and for worse. Because of this, and because of Willcox's proximity to the interstate highway, the community welcomed newcomers and their ties to other parts of the country. In contrast to other community types found in the U.S. such as the Southern county or the New England town (cf. Arensberg and Kimball 1965:105-106), Willcox was an "open" community,

a boom town that went out of its way to make people feel "at home." A few months after we had been in the town the newspaper ran a front-page story on the ethnographic research I was doing, our family, and our good feelings about the community. This was not unusual, as people who moved to Willcox to start a business or join an ongoing private or public agency were also treated to front page stories.

My wife also worked for Abt Associates. She collected demographic and statistical information on the Willcox community, carried out formal interviews, and observed through participation many women's activities in Willcox. Much of her work in gathering and copying school records and talking with school employees complemented the observational work I did on classrooms as the following excerpt from her field journal indicates:

> Wednesday, January 8. Worked all morning at the middle school copying class rosters of teachers for the past three years. Met the new secretary there who just moved here from Phoenix. The regular secretary is in the hospital again. There were twelve new children enrolled due to the work of the power line company north of town. Talked with Ed Kane about teaching history in this part of the country (Ed is from Ohio). Waited for Allan to finish observing a class so we could go home together. Discussed the staff changes with the middle school principal while I waited. After lunch worked on our research budget.

As a married couple, we were invited to join with other families in picnics, dinners, and parties that made up a portion of the Willcox social scene. It is doubtful that I could have done much research into the subtle areas of school and community life had it not been for my wife's formal and informal work on the project. The following excerpt from one of her field logs indicates some of her participation in the community:

> Monday, December 10. Upon returning from a conference read the mail from Abt Associates. Unpacked from our trip and talked to friends who called to see if we were back in town. Ann Schwartz came by with Linda [her daughter] to resume our babysitting exchange. Went to the Junior Women's meeting; the program was on safety and the energy crisis. Met Beth Betrocheli, the wife of the new young lawyer in town and I asked her to go to the Homemakers' Christmas luncheon. I rode with Marjorie Klener and Sandy Carter who told me what had happened while we were gone. . . .
>
> Tuesday, December 11. Baked cookies and got things ready for an evening Tupperware party at our house. 16 women came, some from the school, some ranchers' wives from the Stewart District, and some near neighbors as well as three people from the Monument, 35 miles away. I met several new people, as some brought guests. Terry Warbucks, the bank president's wife, Sally Runner, the principal's wife, and Mary Temple, the wife of the Chamber of Commerce president, and Luanna Penn, who runs the Sears store. They were all a little late because they went to the PTA meeting before coming over.

My wife and family's presence in the community during the time of the research was important in that we were able to quickly establish a place in the community social structure. Soon after our arrival my wife asked me to come to an informal "tea" for the wives of new employees of the school system. This "tea" was a yearly event organized by one group of women who worked in the schools or were spouses of school employees. Since the school district was the largest employer in the area, this tea was a significant doorway into the Willcox way of life. The particular group of young teachers and their spouses who organized this and other entry mechanisms referred to themselves as a "clan." Many of them became our closest friends over the time we lived in the town.

My wife took an active role in research in addition to helping establish a rapport with the community. She, for example, pointed out that the town visitors' center and museum did not contain any displays on the

Mexican American people of Willcox, although it did have graphic displays of the Native American prehistory of the area and the Anglo settlement of the town.

When we moved to Willcox in 1973, our daughter was three years old. A year later she attended the summer "preschool" classes sponsored by the Rural Schools project. During the 1974-75 school year she attended the regular preschool program of the project, and during the 1975-76 school year she attended kindergarten. In addition to these formal ties to the school system and the local project, her friendships with other children further involved us in the networks of the community.

From the beginning of our stay in Willcox I attempted to make it clear that my position was that of an anthropologist, someone who was to document the way people in a small town lived and the impact a federally-supported education project had on that way of life. Even with what seemed at the time to be constant explanations, not all residents understood the difference between the company I worked for, the government, or the local school system. Some, for example, just were not interested in such distinctions. For all intents and purposes, I was either an employee of the school system, a wayward administrator who had his office downtown, or failing that, perhaps an employee of the federal government.

A constant difficulty with research in one's own society is the possibility of becoming completely incorporated into a group or faction in the community and thus becoming immune to the other points of view about an event or situation. The daily explanations of my role as a historical documentor of the project kept this problem from becoming too large, but there were several times when out-of-town people became convinced that I was involved in ways other than those of a dispassionate

researcher. There were times, for example, when my mere presence at an event or meeting typed me as a full-fledged participant.

During one evening meeting of school administrators with a high-powered representative of a regional consulting firm, I was introduced by the superintendent as "Doctor Burns." The consultants were in Willcox at the request of a principal and were attempting to sell the district an evaluation "package." This package called for "progress" evaluation of reading achievement instead of the traditional "pre" and "post" treatment tests that children were given. In short, the consultants argued that weekly tests of pupil performance were more efficient than tests taken once a semester or once a year. Perhaps I appeared puzzled or unconvinced of this particular "package." At any rate, the consultants directed all of their comments and questions to me during the evening, and used me as an example of a "typical administrator" who did not see the simple beauty of their plan. After the meeting was over and the consultants had left, several of the administrators stood around and joked that the consultants had thought of me as a principal that had to be convinced that evaluating programs was important. The administrators had purposely not explained my role to the consultants as a kind of practical joke. As a result, I was forced to become the target of the "hard sell" of the consultants and the other administrators were able to introduce some humor into what might have been an overly serious meeting.

A second instance of "guilt by association" during fieldwork was more insidious. Late during the first year of the project my name began appearing on some of the memoranda that were being circulated within the project. These memos served to schedule meetings, report on project business, and give notice of upcoming events. Many of the memos

were sent to Washington as a part of the local project's reports to convince federal officials that change was indeed occurring. I was included on the distribution list for the memos because I was a part of the local project and made it a point to receive a good sample of school related publications. Some ES/Washington officials began to believe that I was taking an active part in the directing of the project since my name was on so much correspondence and because local educators thought they were doing me a favor by mentioning my name in telephone calls with Washington officials. The issue came to a climax after one telephone conversation between local administrators in Willcox and Washington officials. The telephone conversation was being taped in Willcox and the superintendent began by stating who was in the room. The telephone call was made to clear up a question about the local evaluation of the project by one educator who had been hired to provide local feedback on project activities. One official in Washington interpreted my presence as an indication of an involvement with the local plan for evaluation. This belief was transmitted through the labyrinth of the ES/Washington bureaucracy and later was communicated to my superior at Abt Associates. He then called me and requested that I at least lower my visibility in the local project. From then on I asked local educators not to mention my name to Washington officials and to pencil in my name on memos.

An important point in both of these examples is the idea that I was "too involved" in the social groups of the project was external to the local participants. In both instances my role vis-à-vis the other project personnel in Willcox was clear enough so that we could joke about it as well as discuss strategies to lessen confusion on the part of Washington officials. There were, of course, times when I felt I was

becoming too concerned about particular aspects of the project or the Willcox community. This is to be expected where the investigator is the primary "instrument" or means of gathering data in a study. In these cases I found that I could bring some "research distance" between myself and the phenomenon by writing as much as I could about the issue and my place in it. In a very important sense, writing field journals and notes provided a way of "externalizing" the problems that social involvement in the community brought (Burns 1976a).

Our role in the community was made considerably easier by a number of fortuitous events. The town itself had served as the focus of a history in the 1950s (Schultz 1964), so my role as a historian of the project was well received. Indeed, the definition of my role as a historian was so successful that I was later appointed to the board of directors of a new historical society for the area. Anthropologists were known to residents because a private museum, the Amerind Foundation, was located nearby. The principal archaeologist of the Amerind Foundation was well known to many residents for his work with the prehistory of the area. My professional status also helped to establish a role in the community. Several civic groups, classes in the schools and other organizations requested that I give lectures on our previous research in Yucatan, Mexico. Later, after I had provided copies of a historical sketch of the town (Burns 1975c), I was requested to give several talks on the local history of the area. These talks served as vehicles for explaining the nature of our research. For example the local Rotary Club asked me to give a talk entitled, "What in the World is Allan Burns Doing in Willcox?"

Although Willcox was a community that was new to both my wife and me, we were not unprepared for doing research in a small town. My wife had

been raised in a small Iowa community. We had both carried out field research in Mexico and so were conversant with Spanish and could communicate with the 30 percent of the population who were of Mexican and Mexican American descent. One Chicano resident jokingly referred to us as "la gente de Yucatán" (the people from Yucatan). I had previously researched innovative programs in an inner-city high school and I also held a teaching certificate. Because of these experiences and interests, we were able to establish bonds with many different people in the community.

School administrators often remarked that we understood the complexity as well as the personal difficulty involved in managing an amorphous operation like public education. Teachers appreciated our commitment to scholarly pursuits and found it refreshing that someone would be able to tell "their side" of the story about educational innovations in schools. When a teachers' union was organized in 1974 we were invited to observe the early strategy sessions. People in businesses related to the constraints and freedoms that my corporate ties encompassed. Students remarked that I could see the community as it really was and "cut through the bullshit" that they felt most residents lived with.

The topics that have been chosen for this study reflect our feelings for the town of Willcox, for the project, and professional interests of the field of anthropology. If at times this study appears idealistic and the picture of the community appears to be too good to be true, it is because we enjoyed the quality of life that we experienced in Willcox. There are, of course, many problems with the community, not the least of which is its dependence on outside capital and resources for its existence. Poor people find Willcox a difficult place to live; social services and employment are often hard to come by and wages for unskilled

labor are extremely low. For example, during the last year of my research (1976) the school district raised the base scale for janitors and other service employees to slightly above the minimum wage. Before this was done, it was possible to work for the school district full time and make less than a minimum wage. But we did not find a depressed community in Willcox. The economy of the area was diverse and people came to Willcox to find a good life; few residents felt trapped there.

Three years of intensive field research is a long time to work at defining a social system as it evolves as well as keep a perspective on one's life and work. Our field experience went through many periods of excitement and depression as we alternately saw clearly the structure of how people in a small community organized their lives and also saw the confusion of cross-cutting demands that people live with every day. There was no neat progression during our stay in Willcox from "detached observers" through "community participants" and finally to "ethnographic writers." From the first day we arrived we felt the conflicting strains of being detached and incorporated at the same time. Much of this case study was written while we lived in the community, and so reflects some immediate as well as long-term issues that we had to deal with. I was offered several positions in local government, business, and the school system while we worked in the community. Although our interest and commitment to the town often made these offers very attractive, we fully realized that such offers were expressions of the very open and outward-reaching nature of the community that I was describing on paper.

In this section I have outlined some of the personal and professional aspects of doing the research that forms the basis for this volume. One way to summarize our place in the community and the research

is to quote from my field journal a description of our last few days in Willcox:

> The last week in Willcox was almost unbearable. We were tired and invited out to dinner every night to the homes of friends that we have made from the schools and other parts of the community that have made our stay here so happy. There were a number of hassles involved in selling our house. It was hard to sell it and not be a part of this neighborhood any more.
>
> Tuesday afternoon I went by José's house to drop off some of the material for MANPO. José invited me to stay and have a few shots of whiskey while we talked. During the next few hours we talked about Mexico, how some people came to the U.S. as braceros, how some came as illegal aliens. José said of the illegals, "These are the people who have worked to get where they are. I've tried to help you so that you could hear their story while you've been here, Allan, so that you could write about their lives and lend some dignity to what they've done." I arrived home about eight o'clock that evening.
>
> Wednesday about fifty people surprised us and had a going away party in our yard. They brought all of the food and beer.
>
> Thursday the movers came. Friday afternoon I saw Chito Sanchez in his pick-up truck downtown by the post office. I asked him if he were going to the pot-luck dinner that MANPO was having. He said "well sure, aren't you?" I said that we were too busy. He said, "well, it's for you, you know." We went over to the community center and there were about sixty people from the Chicano community who came for our farewell dinner. After we finished eating, José got up and made a heart-warming speech. Freddie came out and gave Julie a poncho, Jessica a poncho, Christopher a little vest and me a sombrero. Then we had to leave as we had also been invited to the Riely's (a local pharmacist) for a dinner party.
>
> Saturday morning we pulled out onto the interstate. I remember having a kind of hollow feeling similar to what I had felt when we first drove into Willcox three years ago. I recalled the first months of doing fieldwork and the frustrations I felt as I fought every day and every night with the dilemma of doing a study of the people in this town. I recalled the notes, memos, letters that I wrote in an attempt to delineate the subjective from the objective and how I hoped that my mind might be quieted if I externalized the battle. It wasn't. Near the end of our stay I came to a realization that the bargain I had struck in the name of doing ethnography took as much out of me as I had received.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. "RSP" is an abbreviation for "Rural Schools project", a term that was adopted in Willcox to avoid problems over the use of the word "experimental" which was perceived by some people as being controversial. Most of the other case studies in this series use the abbreviation "ES" as an equivalent term.

2. The steam engine for the solar irrigation pump was powered by focusing a large mirror, about thirty feet in diameter, on a tank of water. The mirror had a mechanical tracking device for following the sun, and the pump which was driven by this steam engine could pump enough water to irrigate about 80 acres of land a day. An unfortunate hailstorm broke the expensive mirror on the machine and the solar engine was abandoned a few years after it was built.

3. The popularity of genuinely old artifacts such as "antiques" is an exception to this value placed on youth.

CHAPTER TWO

1. In fact, many Chicanos in Willcox could claim to be Native Americans. During the course of the research, several people asked if my anthropological training had included the study of different Native American groups. When I answered yes, many Chicanos volunteered that their parents were Navajo, Mayo, or Yaqui.

2. Data were secured for this section in three ways: through formal and informal interviews with residents, through controlled elicitation sessions, and through documents which discuss the nature of Willcox. During the early period of fieldwork, the question was often asked, "What kind of community is Willcox?" In many cases, this was asked during the course of a scheduled, tape recorded interview. In addition to the information collected through interviews, a systematic examination of the idea of "community" was undertaken with one resident of the community. Through the use of componential analysis, text analysis, extensive definitions, and other procedures of classification semantics, the concept of "community" was examined. Several documents and plans as well as community profiles produced by the Chamber of Commerce were used as supportive evidence in the following discussion.

3. Solon T. Kimball suggested the term "civic community" for this aspect of community meaning (personal communication, June 19, 1978). In Kimball and Pearsall's The Talledaga Story (1954), the civic community is described in detail in a southern town.

CHAPTER THREE

1. The idea of participant structures was developed in an article by Phillips (1972) who described different verbal and activity strategies among Anglos and Native Americans on the Warm Springs reservation.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. I am indebted to Tom Wacaster who first brought the importance of this stage to my attention.

2. The $46,000 amounted to about 3% of the total school budget for 1972-73, while the $250,000 provided during 1973-74 amounted to about 20% of the budget.

3. The exception to this network of communication is the Mexican American community of Willcox. Few Mexican Americans had more than professional and formal contact with the school board members.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. The other book-length case studies are currently nearing completion. See Clinton 1977; Colfer and Colfer 1977; Donnelly 1978; Firestone 1977; Hennigh 1978; Messerschmidt 1978; Stannard 1978. A series of chapter-length case studies for five of the ten research sites can be found in Herriott and Gross 1979, Chapters 4-8.

2. See Abt, Cerva and Marx 1978; Fitzsimmons, Wolff and Freedman 1975; Fitzsimmons and Freedman 1978; and Rosenblum and Louis 1978.

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APPENDIX A

APPLICATION LETTER

FOR THE WILLCOX RURAL SCHOOLS PROJECT

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PROPOSAL FOR EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM

FOR SMALL RURAL SCHOOLS

I. The contact person for this proposal will be:

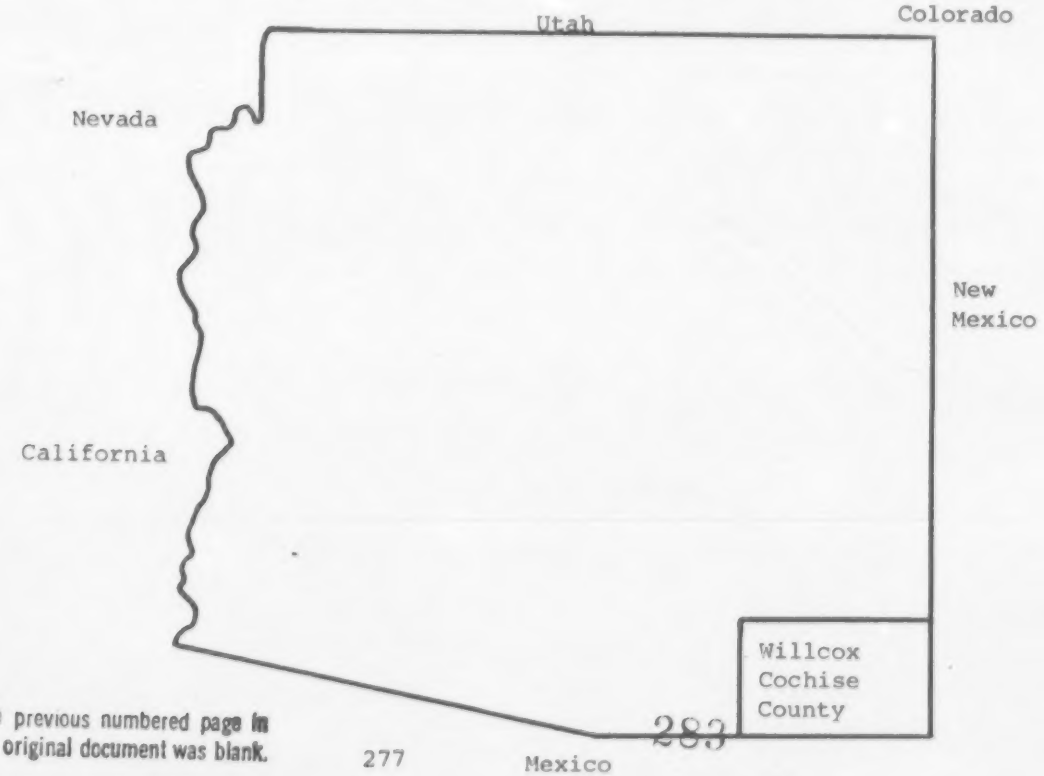
_____, Superintendent
Willcox Public Schools
240 North Bisbee Avenue
Willcox, Arizona 85643
Phone: 602-384-2485

The legal name of the applicant agency is the Willcox Public Schools.

II. The Willcox School system has been in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This district completes all reports which are required under this act.

III. Description of the Community Served By This School District:

The Willcox Public School District is located in the northeast section of Cochise County. (See map.)



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This region is primarily a grassland plateau surrounded by several major mountain ranges. The only town in the school district is the city of Willcox. The district population consists of approximately 2,700 residents in the town and 3,100 in the rural area surrounding the city. The nearest large city is Tucson, Arizona which is approximately 85 miles west of Willcox. The approximate area of the district is 500 square miles. The major source of employment for the residents both in the town and in the surrounding area is agriculture and related support industries and businesses. It has been estimated by the Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture that Willcox serves as a trade area for approximately 8,000 people, most of whom are engaged in agriculture. The district has seen some economic decline the past ten years, due mainly to the agricultural conditions here. (In general, these conditions appear to reflect problems common to many similar agricultural communities of this size.) Approximately 25% of the students of the district are of Mexican-American background, and 5% are black. The remaining 70% are Anglo, many of whom are classified as disadvantaged students.

Description of the School District

The elementary and secondary districts are unified in the Willcox system. The enrollment for the 1971-72 school year is as follows:

Elementary - - - - - - - - 1,015
Secondary - - - - - - - - 418

The district has three separate units. The Elementary School includes kindergarten through fourth grade. Grades five through eight are served by a Middle School, and the High School includes grades nine through twelve. Approximately 700 of these students live in town, and 725 ride the bus to school.

The staff employed by the district includes four administrators, 71 teachers and 39 non-certified personnel. After completing High School in 1971 approximately twenty-five students immediately started working. Fifty of the graduating seniors went on to further education. It is estimated that there are approximately sixty-five students of school age not regularly attending school. This figure represents those of kindergarten age as well as those not attending High School. The dropout rate is calculated as a percentage of the current year's enrollment not attending school. At this time this rate is five percent. The total school budget for the 1971-72 school year for grades K-12 is $1,233,120.37. Per pupil expenditures since 1969 through the current year are as follows:

1969 - 70	K - 8 - - - - - - - - - -	$ 580.93
	9 - 12- - - - - - - - - -	941.33
1970 - 71	K - 8 - - - - - - - - - -	618.40
	9 - 12- - - - - - - - - -	992.25
1971 - 72	K - 8 - - - - - - - - - -	658.86
	9 - 12- - - - - - - - - -	1,046.91

There are no other educational institutions located within this district.

V. The general educational purposes of the Willcox Public Schools as adopted by the Board of Trustees are as follows:

Educational Philosophy of Willcox Public Schools

A. Purpose of education in the Willcox Elementary and High School Districts.

1. Each student should be encouraged and assisted in his efforts to develop fully his mental, moral, emotional and physical powers and to develop the desires, attitudes, and abilities necessary to his becoming a contributing member of American society.

2. Each student should be given the opportunity for self-improvement for as long as he can profit from attending at school and for as long as his conduct is compatible with the welfare of his fellow students and that of the school. Student promotion should be emphasized for the purpose of measurement, incentive, and improvement, even though the fact that promotion is secondary to education should not be lost sight of.

3. Each student should receive a basic education in language, science, mathematics, physical education, and the opportunity for vocational training. The wide range of students' interests, abilities, achievements and ambitions should receive consideration in curriculum planning.

4. We believe the school shares the responsibility for education with parents, churches, and various boys' and girls' organizations, and that it is responsible to our community to educate its young people in such ways as to make possible the best and most successful futures for all the students that they are capable of attaining.

5. Extra-curricular activities that develop planning and leadership should be encouraged. These activities bring our students closer together, build morale, and increase school spirit.

6. We believe that our teaching methods should be in accord with current knowledge of the learning process. Teachers should strive to develop sound judgement, build scholarship, professional skill in stimulating and guiding the pursuit of learning, and an overall emotional stability and social

adjustment to the school and community. Teachers should strive to keep desirable ethical standards, good teacher-student relationships, and cordial relations with the home.

7. Administrators and teachers have as a common goal the best possible education for children. To accomplish this goal, both teacher[s] and administrators should work together through cooperative planning, mutual understanding and effective communication.

The curriculum within the three schools is currently quite traditional. In K-4, the self-contained classroom organization is predominant. The Middle School, which includes grades 5-8, has a departmentalized curriculum. These two schools do include a few team-teaching rooms but there are no non-graded or continuous progress programs at the present time. The high school is attempting to provide a comprehensive program for grades 9-12, which includes both college preparatory courses as well as a variety of vocational programs.

As identified by district personnel, the most important local strengths and resources in our school are:

1. General community support for the school system.
2. A low pupil-teacher ratio.
3. Adequate facilities for a variety of programs.
4. A cohesive administration team.
5. An active K-12 Curriculum Council.
6. Proximity to the University of Arizona and to two Community Colleges.
7. Cultural diversity of the residents of the community.

The most significant weaknesses of our current educational programs are as follows:

1. We feel a definite need to examine and revise our curriculum. Three main problems related to the curriculum are most apparent at this time.
   a. It lacks articulation and coordination in scope and sequence from grades K-12.
   b. It appears to be unrealistic and not relevant to the future and the needs that our students will face within the next ten to twenty years.
   c. As a total district we need to give serious attention to many innovative trends in education. This needs to be done systematically and in terms of our own unique needs as a small rural school district.
   d. We are constantly faced with a lack of time for curriculum study and development.
   e. There is a need for funds to study the curriculum and implement appropriate changes.
2. There is a need to develop a formalized structure for community involvement in order to insure that all residents of the district have an opportunity to participate in the development of school programs.
3. We are faced with a lack of faculty and staff cohesiveness.
4. We do not have programs which build on the cultural diversity of our area--especially the Mexican-American heritage which is present.

As mentioned in item VII, the major emphasis in this project would be curriculum improvement. Through community and staff involvement as described elsewhere in this letter, we hope to revitalize the total educational process in our schools--always keeping in mind the uniqueness of our community.

Some related changes which we believe would help us to improve our educational program are described in the following paragraphs.

It appears that most differentiated staffing programs currently in effect apply only to large urban school districts. We believe there is a definite need to formulate a model differentiated staffing plan which would be appropriate to the needs and resources of the small rural school. The focus of such a proposal would emphasize the utilization of para-professional personnel as well as parent and community involvement. We believe that this type of organizational change would serve in a number of ways to help us expand our programs without adding an additional burden to the district.

There is also a very definite need for in-service education for teachers. Two main areas which would be emphasized to help overcome our problems in these areas would be: (1) to bring in resource people in each major curriculum area to work with teachers and provide input on recent research and evidence especially appropriate to curriculum development in the small rural school; and, (2) we need a series of activities for staff involvement which would help to overcome the fragmentation which currently exists.

Intensive total staff involvement in curriculum study would be necessary if curriculum revisions are to be effectively implemented. This would require adequate financial support for released time, both during the school year and in the summer, for teachers to work on these projects.

After a comprehensive curriculum has been designed, there will be a definite need for staff retraining so that each individual might gain the skills necessary to implement the curriculum programs.

While we currently do make our facilities available to the community, it is thought that this function could be expanded. One area in which this might be most effectively carried out would be through adult education programs. Because our district is somewhat isolated from a large city, this would be very beneficial to local residents if we could offer courses and activities which are educational as well as recreational in nature. We would like to implement a summer program for students not experiencing educational success in school. This summer program would utilize existing facilities which are not being used during the summer months.

We believe there are a number of ways in which this summer project would help meet the individual needs of our students on all levels. It would enable us to emphasize a number of areas in which students are having learning difficulties. After identifying such students, we would envision emphasizing the following areas in a summer program: (1) remedial instruction, especially in the skills areas, for those students who are below grade level and who are having serious problems during the regular school year; (2) the program must be conducive to attitude change so that students who are not experiencing success in school and who are probably very discouraged with the educational process, might have an opportunity to see learning as a positive, productive and exciting experience.

We feel that a parent-teacher steering committee should be organized to identify pupil and community needs. This group would periodically assess our programs in terms of these needs and act as a sounding board for concerns or problems that arise in many aspects of the school operation.

An extensive family counseling program should be implemented since it appears that both the cognitive and affective difficulties which youngsters experience are related to, or are the result of, difficulties in the home. In our limited experience with this type of activity we have found that working with the family is a key to helping the student in many cases.

In a summer program as well as during the regular school year we would like to use many community leaders and parents as classroom resource people and as instructional aides. It would be possible for us to build upon our Mexican-American cultural resources as well in this manner.

We would also like to explore the possibility of cultural exchange programs both with Mexico and with other communities in southeastern Arizona and New Mexico who have student populations similar to ours. We believe that such programs would greatly enrich the school curriculum. It would also encourage a sense of cultural pride in our Mexican-American students, many of whom do have difficulty in our traditional school program.

In general, we believe that our instructional modes must be designed so that they better meet the needs of <u>all</u> individual students. This must take place if greater learning is to result, and it is especially true for the student who has not been able to experience success in the current program.

We believe in a district this size there is great potential for community improvement through increased involvement with the school. We have begun to expand our career education program during the current year. The response from parents and business leaders in the community has been very favorable and it is beginning to open up new avenues of

communication between the community and the schools. These activities could be expanded considerably.

We also believe an extensive parent and family counseling project would strengthen the relationship between the community and the school organization. Through our limited work in this area during the current year we are finding that working with parents in a counseling situation is a very effective means to improve communication and encourage parent involvement in the school.

Another area in which the community could be served would be in the expansion of the community use of school facilities. Although we are doing some of this at the present time there are no doubt many additional ways in which we can make the facilities available for community groups. (For example, we have a new Instructional Materials Center which could be opened to individuals or groups after school hours and during the summer months.)

A more extensive adult education program with emphasis on both educational and leisure time activities would also encourage more school-community cooperation.

To summarize, it is the feeling of this district that the community-school concept could be very effectively implemented in our area. Although most of the emphasis nationally in the community-school movement has been in the large urban areas, it would seem that a small rural community would be even better suited to this type of emphasis. The benefits which would accrue to the school as well as the community would be invaluable assets to both.

There are a number of outside agencies which the district could call upon for assistance in implementing this project. One of the main

sources of assistance would be the institutions for higher learning in this part of the state. These would include the University of Arizona as well as Eastern Arizona Junior College and Cochise College. All three of these institutions are located within a 100-mile radius of the school district.

There are a number of government agencies which could also be contacted for assistance. The first of these would be the local county organization. Cochise County has a commendable record of cooperative efforts in school programs. They would be especially helpful in disseminating information resulting from this project. Another government organization would be SEAGO (Southeastern Arizona Government Organization). This is an educational functioning committee for a four-county area which is especially interested in promoting the study and development of educational programs in Southeastern Arizona. On a state level there are many federal project officers who have been very willing to cooperate with us in program development in the past. The two major agencies which would be contacted would be the Title I Office and the Title I Migrant Office. Both of these agencies offer assistance in program development and implementation. This district also cooperates with the Office of Economic Opportunity in implementing programs such as the Neighborhood Youth Group, Mainstream and Upward Bound. There are a number of local service organizations in Willcox which would be very willing to provide resources and assistance whenever it is appropriate.

In general, we see that these outside agencies would provide four useful services: serving in advisory capacity, providing a consulting service, providing resources, and helping with the statistical analysis of data. Our community is currently involved with some of these support agencies.

In addition, it is proposed that the experimental schools' project steering committee composed of community leaders and personnel would be instrumental in the total program. This would naturally include calling on any of these agencies for assistance. These agencies would be chosen on the basis of how well they could serve any specific need of the project as identified by the community-school steering committee. We would place a priority on staying as close to the community as possible in seeking this assistance.

It has become quite apparent that if the quality of education in a small rural school is to improve significantly, the style of activity within that school cannot remain static and traditional. There are many innovations which are especially appropriate to the small school, but implementing these needed changes will necessitate two important areas of activity--community involvement in identifying needs and recommending changes, and teacher involvement in program development and implementation. These are the two major areas which we recommend as the basis for our Experimental Schools proposal.